Hafa Adai!

Conference on empowering women entrepreneurs successfully held. PAGE 2
CUC unveils new filtration system. PAGE 4

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Palacios supports tax incentives for MACS

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

A photo of one of the planes that will be a part of Marianas Air Connection Services' fleet should they be granted a qualifying certificate and start providing regular inter-island air service.

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios says he supports tax incentives for Marianas Air Connections Services, operated by J&P Holdings, if it means inter-island air service for the CNMI.

See MACS on Page 4

Sablan

Kilili's offices to close up shop

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) has officially announced that his congressional offices will close its doors after Dec. 13 as delegate-elect Kimberlyn King-Hinds prepares to take the reins.

In his *e-Kilili* newsletter last Friday, Sablan announced that his congressional offices on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota will remain open to the public through Dec. 13, 2024.

Meanwhile, his Capitol congressional office in Washington, D.C. will be vacated effective Nov. 21.

"Effective Thursday, Nov.

See KILILI on Page 4

Naraja

Naraja recuses from Villanueva contempt case

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
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CORRESPONDENT

The contempt case against Shayne Villanueva, a contractor implicated in the controversial Building Optimism, Opportunities, and Stability Program program, has seen further

See NARAJA on Page 4

Rotary treats *man'amko* to Thanksgiving lunch

By RACQUEL H. FLOYD
raxfloyd@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

The Rotary Club of Saipan's annual Thanksgiving lunch at the Office of Aging is their way of honoring and celebrating the pillars of the community, according to Rotary Club of Saipan president

See ROTARY on Page 4

RACQUEL FLOYD

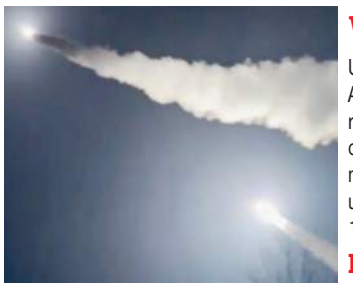
Rotary Club of Saipan hosted its annual Thanksgiving lunch for the *man'amko* last Tuesday at the Aging Center in Chinatown.

INSIDE

NATION

President-elect Donald Trump is filling key posts in his second administration, and it's shaping up much differently than his first. He's prioritizing loyalists for top jobs.

PAGE 9



WORLD

Ukraine fired several American-supplied longer-range missiles into Russia, officials said Tuesday, marking the first time Kyiv used the weapons that way in 1,000 days of war.

PAGE 10

LIFE & STYLE

Walk into any supermarket and you can generally buy a banana for less than $1. But a banana duct-taped to a wall? That might sell for more than $1 million at an upcoming auction at Sotheby's in New York.

PAGE 11

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Participants are all smiles following non-profit organization Abigail's "Believing in Women and Investing in their Ideas" conference last Saturday at Pepoy's Restaurant & Cafe in Susupe.

Local

Conference on empowering women entrepreneurs successfully held

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

Over 60 participants gathered for non-profit organization Abigail's "Believing in Women and Investing in their Ideas" conference last Saturday at Pepoy's Restaurant and Cafe in Susupe.

Although both men and women were allowed to attend the event, the meeting was mainly focused on aspiring female entrepreneurs and encouraging not only the acceptance but support of these women.

Abigail's president and co-founder Femie Rey shared that the conference was comprised of a series of presentations from business owners and entrepreneurs, namely Angie Lee, Caroline Jones, Ceaşar Supetran, and Bong Malasarte. It also consisted of a question-and-answer portion and an inspirational message.

"This month marks the fourth-year anniversary of Abigail's. Every year we always like to have a women's conference, watching women [succeed], and empowering women and their families, and we do different kinds of topics every year. This year we chose 'Believing in Women and Investing in Ideas' after it was suggested by our volunteers."

She said Abigail's members had been asking to know more about how to start a business and be empowered by it, and given the current economic crisis the CNMI is under, it was a good idea to stage a business-centric conference this year.

"We thought it would be great for women to go into business if they can," she said.

Rey added that she began inviting speakers, specifically individuals involved in business to share their experiences on how they started their own business, what challenges they faced, and how they navigated through tough situations.

Abigail's was born amidst the COVID-19 pandemic with the goal to prevent domestic violence from happening in homes and providing a place for women and children to find support and help should they face domestic violence.

"Our mission is to empower women and their families through building healthy relationships and not only for families, but also for communities, where everyone has a voice and is free from domestic violence. We believe that by giving women tools, and the how to's to create some resources for themselves, that it could lessen their stress and they could have a way to provide for their families."

Rey said Abigail's want women to realize that they can

See CONFERENCE on Page 3

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

This is to inform the public that **JARELYN A. VILLACANAS** whose picture appears above is no longer connected with SUCCESS INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION effective October 1, 2024.

Any transaction made by her on the company's behalf will not be honored. Please report & call us at 670-322-1558 of any unauthorized activity .

We decided to release this Notice to the public ***to avoid any confusion & circumstances*** where people might decide to work with her because of a perceived continuing business relationship with SUCCESS INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION.

Please be guided accordingly.

Scheduled power service interruptions on Nov. 22 and 26

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform the general public that there will be scheduled power service interruptions on Friday, Nov 22, 2024, and Tuesday, Nov. 26, 2024. See additional below:

Friday, Nov. 22, 2024

- Power Service Interruption Time: 8:30am-12:30pm
- Area(s) Affected: Beach Road
- Water Well(s) Affected: None
- Wastewater Facilities Affected: S-10
- Traffic Light(s) Affected: None
- Purpose: To allow CUC linemen to replace a 45-foot wooden power pole with a 45-foot concrete pole.

Friday, Nov. 22, 2024

- Power Service Interruption Time: 10:30am-1:30pm
- Area(s) Affected: Quarter Master Traffic Light
- Water Well(s) Affected: None
- Wastewater Facilities Affected: S-11 and S-12
- Traffic Light(s) Affected: Quarter Master

Momentary Power Service Interruption Times: 10:30am-11am and 1:30pm to 2pm.

- Area(s) Affected: Beach Road
- Water Well(s) Affected: None
- Wastewater Facilities Affected: S-11 and S-12
- Purpose: To allow CUC linemen to replace a 40-foot wooden power pole with a 40-foot concrete pole and a 35-foot wooden power pole with a 35-foot concrete pole.

Tuesday, Nov. 26, 2024

- Power Service Interruption Time: 8:30am-2:30pm
- Area(s) Affected: Portion of Garapan
- Water Wells) Affected: None
- Wastewater Facilities Affected: S-9
- Traffic Lights) Affected: None
- Purpose: To allow CUC linemen to replace two (2) 45-foot wooden power poles with 45-foot concrete poles.

CUC appreciates the public's cooperation and understanding as CUC works to ensure reliable service for its customers. For more information, contact CUC's hotline at (670) 236-4333, visit its website, and monitor its Facebook page for the latest updates. For emergencies, contact Customer Service at (670) 664-4282. (670) 664-4282. ***(PR)***

CUC

The map of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s scheduled power service interruption along a portion of Garapan on Tuesday, Nov 22, 2024.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

DLNR to close for professional dev't on Nov. 22

The Department of Lands and Natural Resources announces that it will be closed on Friday, Nov. 22, 2024, for a full day dedicated to professional development. This closure is part of the department's commitment to continuous learning and improvement within our team.

Please note that revenue-generating operations will remain unaffected and continue to function as usual during this period. Regular operations will resume on Monday, Nov. 25, 2024.

For more information, contact the Department of Lands and Natural Resources at (670) 322-9830. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation. ***(PR)***

DRT reminds 501© orgs of filing requirement

The Division of Revenue and Taxation would like to remind all 501© organizations that have been granted tax-exempt status, as well as those with pending applications for exemption from the earnings tax, business gross revenue tax, and NMTIT of your legal obligation to file an annual information return.

Under CNMI Revenue and Taxation regulations, such 501©, or tax exempt, organizations are required to submit their annual returns by the designated due date or the approved extension date. Failure to comply with this filing requirement may result in the revocation of tax-exempt status.

The division urges all 501© organizations to ensure timely filing to maintain their tax-exempt status and avoid potential penalties. Please visit https://finance.gov.mp/faq.php for more information on filing requirements.

For more information, contact DRT at (670) 664-1040 or revtaxinfo@dof.gov.mp. ***(PR)***

Fraud Awareness Week, DRT reminds all to be vigilant

The Division of Revenue and Taxation would like to remind the community that tax fraud is a serious issue in the CNMI. As part of Fraud Awareness Week, which runs from Nov. 17 through Nov. 23, 2024, DRT is calling on taxpayers and businesses to remain vigilant and report any suspected cases of fraud or scams.

Tax fraud not only undermines the fairness of the system but also impacts vital public resources. Common types of tax fraud include:

- Unsubstantiated and unreported income
- Wagering/gambling income
- Failure to pay taxes, withhold taxes or file returns

DRT encourages all residents to report any suspicious activity or tax fraud concerns by contacting their office at (670) 664-1040. Fraud Awareness Week is an opportunity for everyone in our community to learn about the importance of combating fraud and prevention of fraud.

For more information on global fraud awareness and prevention efforts, please visit fraudweek.com

For more information on tax matters, contact DRT at (670) 664-1040 or revtaxinfo@dof.gov.mp. ***(PR)***

SHEFA application deadline on Feb. 28

To all new, ongoing, and returning applicants, Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance would like to inform you that our Spring 2025 applications will be available online on Dec. 1, 2024 and the deadline to apply and submit supporting documents is on Feb. 28, 2025.

For more information and updates you can check our Facebook page at Saipan SHEFA or give us a call at (670) 233-5995. ***(PR)***

CONFERENCE

From page 2

do something by themselves and don't have to be fully dependent on their husbands.

"And so, like, having something to do, especially having an additional income to help the family would alleviate the stress in the family. As sometimes stress could be a factor for people to be in arguments and sometimes it could lead to violence."

Rey said she was happy with the turnout for the event and hopes to continue to provide these services to women and families. She also shared that she hopes to partner with more local businesses or individuals willing to teach skillsets to these ladies.

When asked on the name Abigail's, Rey told *Saipan Tribune* that the name had been derived from the Bible's Old Testament character Abigail, and she said that although they are not strictly a religious group, each letter in the name represents something about the character that they as women hope to provide—"A" for advocacy, "B" for brilliance, "I" for Intelligence, "G" for good morals, "A" for affirmation, "I" for instruction, "L" for love, and "S" for services.

To participate in the Abigail's future endeavors, you can send a letter to their mailing address: PO Box 502965 As Perdido Road, Chalan Piao, Saipan MP 96950, or check out their office building 3794 on As Perdido Rd. Chalan Piao, Saipan or you can email them at abigails.media@abigailssaipan.org, or call (670) 788-3659.

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

PUBLIC NOTICE
OFFICE CLOSURE

November 19, 2024

This notice is to inform the General Public that the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Central Office in Garapan, the CDBG-DR Program Office in the 3rd Floor of the Ladera Building, Beach Road, the NMHC Tinian and Rota Field Offices will be closed on November 27, 2024, from 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM for an Agency Wide Professional Development Normal business operation will resume at 2:00 PM.

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Acting Corporate Director

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp
Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net
Telephone Numbers 670-234-6866/9447
Fax No: 670-234-9021

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

NMHC hereby publicly discloses that on **March 12, 2021, Soledad Victoria M. Cepeda**, an immediate family member of **Krishna M. Piol**, an employee of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, applied for assistance under the Community Development Block Grant- Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Housing Program.

Said applicant has been determined to be a member of a group or class of low to moderate income individuals intended to be beneficiaries of the assisted activity and is applying to receive generally the same benefits being made available to the group or class. **Krishna M. Piol**, an employee of NMHC, is not and shall not be involved in the handling of this grant application.

NMHC discloses this possible conflict pursuant to 24 CFR 92.356 in order to allow any interested persons to comment before the application is considered for an exception under the applicable conflict regulations.

Written comments may be faxed to Fax No.: (670) 234-9451, mailed to P.O. Box 500514 Saipan, MP 96950, or emailed to cnmi-cdbg-dr@nmhcgov.net on or before **December 12, 2024.**

Dated this 21st day of November, 2024.

/S/Jesse S. Palacios
Acting Corporate Director

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp
Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net
Telephone Numbers 670-234-6866/9447
Fax No: 670-234-9021

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

NMHC hereby publicly discloses that on November 15, 2023, **Shirley Ada Cabrera and Allan Aldan Cabrera,** immediate family members of **Roy Aldan Ada, elected official and Congressman of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands,** applied for assistance under the Community Development Block Grant- Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Housing Program.

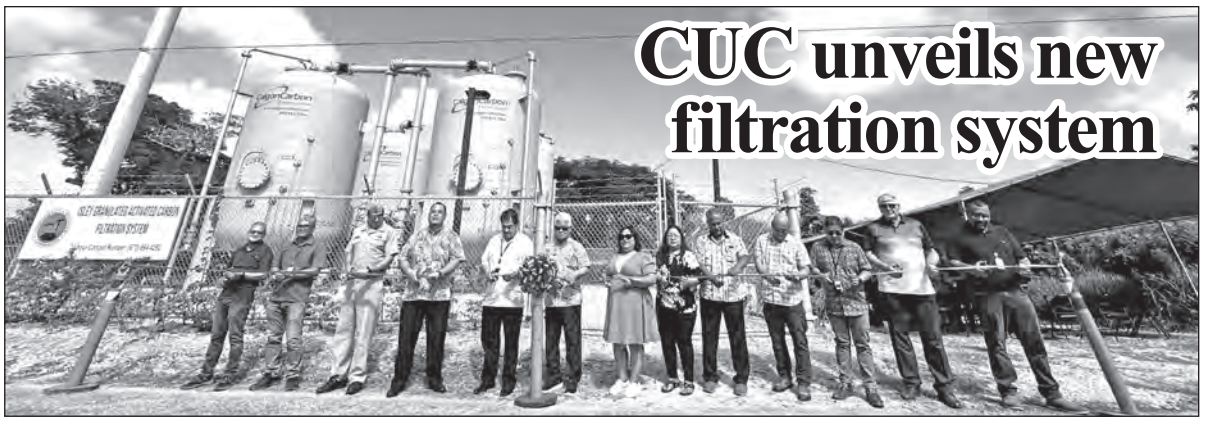
Said applicant has been determined to be a member of a group or class of individuals who meet the national objective of urgent need and are intended to be beneficiaries of the assisted activity and is applying to receive generally the same benefits being made available to the group or class. **Congressman Roy Aldan Ada,** is not and shall not be involved in the handling of this grant application.

NMHC discloses this possible conflict pursuant to 24 CFR 92.356 in order to allow any interested persons to comment before the application is considered for an exception under the applicable conflict regulations.

Written comments may be faxed to Fax No.: (670) 234-9451. mailed to P.O. Box 500514 Saipan, MP 96950, or emailed to cnmi-cdbg-dr@nmhcgov.net on or before **December 12, 2024.**

Dated this 21st day of November,2024.

/S/Jesse S. Palacios
Acting Corporate Director



CUC unveils new filtration system

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. officially unveiled the Isley Field and Obyan Wells Granular Activated Carbon Water Filtration System yesterday and celebrated the momentous occasion through a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. unveiled yesterday the Isley Field and Obyan Wells Granular Activated Carbon Water Filtration System through a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The ceremony was attended by dignitaries like Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, members of the Legislature, various government agency representatives, workers who had a hand in the construction of the filtrations system, and members of the community.

Speaking on the importance of the system, CUC executive director Kevin Watson said these systems are designed to reduce contamination levels and eventually eliminate the public health risk of PFAS and PFOA by filtering out the contaminants.

According to an online definition, PFAS chemicals include PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid) and PFOS (perfluorooctane sulfonic acid). PFAS do not break down easily and stay in the environment for a very long time, especially in water.

"Several years ago, airport firefighters used firefighting foam that was used as a training base here for other Pacific Islands. It was very useful, and it put out many fires fast. However, in 2015, during our sampling process it was found to contain harmful chemicals; specifically, PFAS and PFOA chemicals which are actually cancer causing. Now, since then, [the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency] has put limits on that. Even before that, the CNMI [Bureau of Environmental Coastal Quality] put limits on that to protect citizens of the CNMI. For that to happen, activated carbon through a filtration system was needed. The waters pump from the Isley and Obyan wells that contain the chemicals through the activated carbon and the chemicals adhere to the carbon to remove the PFAS and PFOA," he said.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

NARAJA

From page 1

delays following the recusal of Superior Court Presiding Judge Roberto C. Naraja due to a potential conflict of interest.

The bench trial, now reassigned to Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo, has been rescheduled to Jan. 27, 2025.

On Friday, Nov. 15, Naraja stepped away from the case, listing concerns over impartiality after reviewing new exhibits presented by Villanueva's defense team. The exhibit included photographs of a sign endorsing Rep. Ralph Naraja Yumul (Ind-Saipan), a key witness in the case and Naraja's nephew.

Naraja stated in his recusal order, "A reasonable person, fully informed of the facts, might question my impartiality." He emphasized that the sign, located near his property but on public land, was not placed with his consent. However, he acknowledged its proximity could create the appearance of bias.

Villanueva's attorney, Keith Chambers, had previously requested Naraja's recusal, arguing that the judge's perceived political endorsement of Yumul compromised the integrity of the proceedings. Assistant attorney general James Kingman, representing the government, opposed the motion, but Naraja ultimately removed himself from the case.

The case stems from Villanueva's refusal to answer questions during a March 2024 House hearing on BOOST, a $17-million federally funded program aimed at providing community assistance. Villanueva, owner of Roil Soil Marketing, was contracted to help implement BOOST under the administration of former Governor Ralph DLG Torres.

Villanueva invoked his Fifth Amendment right during the hearing, leading the House special committee, chaired by Yumul, to hold him in contempt. His defense has since raised questions about the committee's jurisdiction and the relevance of its inquiries.

During a status conference on Monday, Nov. 18, Govendo addressed several motions and rescheduled the trial to ensure all pending issues are resolved beforehand. Villanueva appeared with his attorneys, Chambers and Joaquin Torres, while Kingman represented the government.

Key arguments centered on a motion by the defense to subpoena Kingman as a witness and disqualify him from the case due to a potential conflict of interest. Chambers argued that Kingman's prior communications with Villanueva's counsel regarding potential criminal charges against Villanueva could impact his client's defense.

Kingman opposed the motion, stating in his opposition "A key legal problem with this proposed strategy comes in the second clause: 'Through Mr. Villanueva's counsel.' If the strategy is to somehow put forward the mental condition of the defendant at the alleged time, that can be done either through inference by action or through the testimony of the only person that knows. If it is through inference based on a conversation, it would need to be the principles of that conversation." Kingman said that he has communicated with the lawyer for the defendant, and that that is not communicating with Villanueva.

Kingman added that the defendant also claims to want him to be disqualified because defendant intends to introduce exhibits that were written statements by Kingman. "The proposed strategy relies on privileged attorney-attorney communication and cannot be admitted as evidence in court." He said arguing that the defense's reasoning failed to establish a legitimate basis for his disqualification.

Govendo took the motions under advisement and promised a written decision by week's end.

As of now the trial is set for January 2025, as both sides continue to prepare for what is shaping up to be a high-profile case.

KILILI

From page 1

21, 2024, your Capitol congressional office at 2267 Rayburn House Office Building will be vacated," the e-newsletter said.

Sablan explains all members of the U.S. Congress who are retiring or were not re-elected are moving out to allow the House of Representatives to prepare for the next Congress that will convene on Jan. 3, 2025.

He said the Washington-based congressional staff will still be present but in a common workspace at Rayburn House to answer calls or help constituents with tours of the Capitol.

"Only the physical office that has been our home for the last four years will no longer be available. Meanwhile, the congressional offices on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota will remain as they are and open to serve you through Dec. 13," Sablan said.

ROTARY

From page 1

Joann Aquino.

"Today, as we gather for the RCS annual man'amko lunch celebration, I'm reminded of a profound truth—the real magic isn't just in Rotary, it's in you, our *man'amko*. You're the keepers of our stories, the guardians of our traditions, and the bridge between our past and our future. In a world where change comes at lightning speed, your wisdom grounds us, your stories guide us, and your presence reminds us of who we are and where we come from," said Aquino in her speech last Tuesday.

Aquino added that the annual lunch is so much more than just a meal but it's their way of saying thank you.

"Our theme, the 'Magic of Rotary' is about creating moments like these moments where we can pause and celebrate the pillars of our community. Each story you share, each tradition you preserve, and each smile you offer adds to the enchanting tapestry of our island culture. That is why our annual lunch celebration is so much more than just a meal, it's our way of saying thank you for the lifetime of love and wisdom you've shared with us and our community and remain our most precious blessing," she added.

Office of Aging director Walter Manglona expressed his gratitude to the Rotary Club of Saipan.

"I don't remember the exact year we started this tradition, but the Rotary Club of Saipan has been hosting the man'amko even way before COVID time. Their dedication and their commitment to continue to come here and show you that they care, and they love you. We are so thankful and fully blessed and with that, like I tell everybody, you know the entire community here on this beautiful island of Saipan has been spoiling the man'amko and we never lose that sense of appreciation," said Manglona in his remarks.

Man'amko Association president Aurora Desebel also thanked the Rotary for their unending support.

"I wish to give you thanks for your unending support and assistance every year, season year of Thanksgiving... And I know that your door is always open because we will be knocking on your door to come and see us for our Christmas party," said Desebel.

Aquino acknowledged and introduced the RCS officers and members present during the celebration and commended RCS Community Service director Billy Grow for chairing the annual event.

Grow in an interview said they prepared food for 120 *man'amko* and Office on Aging staff.

"The food was catered by Herman's Modern Bakery and RCS director Das (Krishnan) was kind enough to provide the staff to support the event by carving the turkey, ham, and roasted pig. As well as providing catering trays to hold the food. The plates and silverware all came from Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan," said Grow.

Interact and Rotaract members also volunteered to help distribute silverware and serve the plated food to the man'amko tables.

Voices of the Marianas Bernice Sabino provided the entertainment and the event was concluded with a group photo.

MACS

From page 1

In an interview with Palacios yesterday, he shared his opinion on MACS' application for a qualifying certificate that is currently being reviewed by the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority.

The certificate essentially waives taxes for MACS and its mother company J&P Holdings to allow the airline to invest over $8 million in purchasing a fleet of planes that will be used for inter-island travel between CNMI islands and possibly Guam.

Palacios says he supports this, but he leaves it up to the experts.

"We should incentivize them but we should leave it up to the experts and the agency, CEDA, to make those determinations like what is a reasonable level of incentives for a company like MACs," he said.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, should CEDA grant J&P Holdings (CNMI) LLC a qualifying certificate—essentially to waive certain local taxes for J&P Holdings, its subsidiaries, and its owners—Micronesia Air Connections Services could start providing regular inter-island air service as early as December.

A long standing CNMI investor, J&P Holdings, owned by John and Paula Stewart, has decided to branch out from air cargo, charter, scenic flight, and skydiving services by establishing a new airline in the CNMI focused on safe and reliable inter-island travel as well as direct air service from Saipan to Guam.

However, providing this kind of service is no easy feat as it would cost upwards of $8 million to cover the costs of acquiring planes alone (specifically nine 9-seater planes, with plans to expand into 19-seater planes).

According to J&P Holdings tax attorney Tina Azarvand, to ensure the airline's viability and sustainability, the company has applied for a qualifying certificate with the CEDA for abatement and rebate of certain CNMI taxes.

Essentially, the certificate would waive certain taxes MACS would need to pay to the local government for a certain number of years.

Azavand explained that the qualifying certificate's benefits extend beyond just helping the new airline (MACS) and its parent company (J&P Holdings). Her trickle-down economics explanation contends that the certificate helps MACS avoid financial losses in its early years, when startup costs are high, and profits are low. This financial support enables J&P Holdings to invest in new aircraft, pay landing fees, and take on the risks of providing air service.

The lawyer states that the initial tax benefits to the company would then flow down through increased tourism to revitalize the CNMI's COVID-impacted economy "leading to higher hotel occupancies, increased car rentals, more restaurant dining, and greater overall visitor spending throughout the community, resulting in incidental tax revenue increases for the CNMI."

Most importantly, with MACS in operation, the people of Tinian and Rota will have another option in terms of inter-island travel as MACS would bring in much needed competition which in turn would mean lower fares.

MACS intends to offer competitive fares for flights between Saipan and Tinian, Rota, and Guam. Final fares will depend on landing fees and the outcome of the qualifying certificate. MACS will also provide discounts to locals, seniors, and veterans.

AT 16TH ANNUAL EMPLOYER AWARDS CEREMONY

Guam-CNMI ESGR State Committee honors employers

BARRIGADA, Guam— The Guam-CNMI Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve State Committee, a Department of Defense program, proudly honored employers who go above and beyond in supporting their National Guard and Reserve employees. The 16th Annual Employer Awards Ceremony took place on Aug. 29, 2024, at the Hyatt Regency Guam, recognizing the unwavering dedication and patriotism of 22 employers across Guam and the CNMI who were nominated for the prestigious 2024 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award.

The nominated employers exemplify the vital role that supportive workplaces play in empowering Guard and Reserve members, who are often called to duty alongside their active-duty counterparts, whether in times of peace, crisis, or war. ESGR's awards acknowledge these organizations for their exceptional commitment to service members and their families.

Among the awards presented, the Pro Patria Award, the highest State-level recognition, was given to three exemplary employers who have adopted policies that significantly support their Guard and Reserve employees, enabling them to fulfill their military duties with greater ease. This year's honorees include:

- United Airlines Guam in the large business category
- Pacific Engineering Group and Services, LLC in the small business category
- Department of Corrections in the government category

The Pro Patria Award, derived from the Latin phrase meaning "For One's Country," symbolizes an employer's exceptional patriotism and dedication to the national defense mission.

Through ceremonies such as this, the Guam-CNMI ESGR State Committee aims to highlight the critical role of supportive employers and the profound impact they have on our community and national security. These awards serve as a tribute to employers who embody the spirit of patriotism and are dedicated to ensuring that their Guard and Reserve employees can serve our country with pride.

The second highest state-level award, the Above and Beyond Award, goes to seven deserving employers' who have supported the patronage and service to their service member employees and their families. They are:

- CNMI Workforce Investment Agency, CNMI Department of Labor
- U.S. Army's Combined Arms Training Center, Camp Fuji
- DZSP21, LLC
- Guam Fire Department, Government of Guam
- Transportation Security Administration, U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- Tiyan High School, Guam Department of Education
- U.S. District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands

The Most Supportive Award was presented to 12 employers for their outstanding support and patronage to their service members and their families. They are:

- Andersen Elementary School, Department of Defense Education Activity
- Defense Commissary Agency CDC Guam
- Cosmos Distributing Co. Ltd.
- Guam Regional Medical City
- Hawthorne Cat
- JP Torres Success Academy, Guam Department of Education
- Little Ones Childcare Center
- Napa Auto Parts
- Naval Base Guam Security
- Office of the Attorney General of Guam, Government of Guam
- SET Electric, Inc.
- U.S. Attorney's Office for Districts of Guam and CNMI

The Seven Seals Award is presented to individual(s) or organization(s) for their achievement, initiative, or support of the ESGR mission, to include the efforts toward the more than 2,300 volunteers who carry out ESGR's mission across the nation and on our islands on a daily basis.

This year's eight recipients are:

1. Senator Joe S. San Agustin, 37th Guam Legislature
2. General Mark W. Siekman, Commanding General, 9th Mission Support Command, U.S. Army Reserve
3. Captain Nicholas Simmons, Commanding Officer, U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia Sector Guam
4. Lieutenant Commander Brian Matic, Commanding Officer, U.S. Navy Reserve Center, Guam
5. Edward Untalan, executive vice president and Guam-CNMI Region manager; First Hawaiian Bank
6. Irene Mafnas, vice president Operations, Guam-CNMI Region; First Hawaiian Bank;
7. Vickie Izuka, vice president and Saipan area manager, First Hawaiian Bank
8. Daniel Aquino, special assistant, Commonwealth Bureau of Military Affairs

The Spirit of Volunteerism Award, also known as the Volunteer of the Year Award, recognizes the volunteer(s) who displayed the highest level of volunteer service, continued quality service highlighting patriotism, good citizenship, and public responsibility.

The 2024 Spirit of Volunteerism Award is given to retired U.S. Army Major General Benny M. Paulino, vice chair, Guam-CNMI Committee.

The Spirit of Volunteerism Award for 2023 was given to Dina San Nicolas, training director, Guam-CNMI Committee since the award was not presented last year.

Guam's first James M. Roche Spirit of Volunteerism National Award was presented to retired U.S. Army Major General Benny M. Paulino, vice chair, Guam-CNMI Committee for his outstanding service to ESGR and the Department of Defense. This award is the highest National award given to a State Committee volunteer for sustained quality service as a volunteer over a substantial period of years. The award highlights patriotism, good citizenship and public responsibility, often achieved by heroic efforts and great personal sacrifice, sustained exceptional and superior performance of volunteer duties across a broad spectrum of committee activities for a minimum period of five years.

ESGR has the unique characteristic for a government organization of relying on nearly 2,300 volunteers across 54 state committees to carry out local engagement with Service members, employers, and to conduct informal mediation between civilian employers and Service members when issues arise related to military service.

At the award ceremony, Cathyann C. Gogue, Guam-CNMI ESGR State chair, expressed her appreciation for the honorees, stating, "The employers recognized at this event have gone beyond what is legally required, offering additional benefits and personal support to their service member employees and their families, especially during deployments. This dedication is why these employers were nominated by their service member employees for these prestigious awards."

The Guam-CNMI ESGR State Committee extends heartfelt congratulations to retired Major General Paulino for his remarkable contributions and unwavering commitment to ESGR's mission.

Our nation has relied heavily on the National Guard and Reserve since 9-11 and our local communities rely heavily on our local citizen warriors in times of natural disasters. The support and sacrifices from the civilian employer is critical to maintaining the strength and readiness of Guard and Reserve, and our national security.

ESGR, a Department of Defense program, seeks to foster a culture in which all employers support and value the employment and military service of members of the National Guard and Reserve in the United States. For more information about ESGR outreach programs or volunteer opportunities, contact Angel Vibar at (671) 344-1283 or visit www.esgr.mil. ***(PR)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Board of Directors

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to the Open Government Act (1 CMC §9901 et seq), the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation ("CUC") Board of Directors hereby informs the general public that the Board will hold its Regular Board Meeting on Monday, November 25, 2024, at 9:30 a.m. The meeting will be held in the CUC Conference Room, Room 17, 3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building. The following agenda will be considered, and public attendance is welcome.

AGENDA

I. Preliminary Matters
  A. Call to Order
  B. Roll Call
  C. Adoption of Agenda
  D. Adoption of Minutes
    I. September 26, 2024 Regular Board Meeting
    II. October 4, 2024 Special Board Meeting
    III. October 31, 2024 Special Board Meeting
  E. Correspondence
II. Management Reports
  A. Executive Director's Report
  B. Chief Financial Officer's Report
  C. Legal Counsel's Report
III. Committee Reports
  A. Standing Committee for Appeals
    I. 24-001-PS
    II. 24-002-PS
  B. Personnel Committee
    I. 24-0001-CA
    II. 24-0002-CA
IV. Old Business
  A. Government and CHCC Receivables
  B. Privatization of Power Generation
  C. Renewable Energy Plans
  D. CUC Drug Policy
  E. CUC Classification & Compensation Plan
  F. Fuel Adjustment Charge
  G. Integrated Resource Plan
V. New Business
  A. Board Resolution 2024-01
  B. Continuance of Decision on Appeal No. 24-001-BD Pursuant to NMIAC § 50-40-120(b)
  C. Status of the Cost of Service Study
VI. Public Comments*

* In accordance with Public Law 8-41, additional agenda items may be added to the above listing only by a recorded vote of the majority members of the governing body.
** All interested persons are welcome to attend and submit written and oral testimony on the above agenda items. Public Comments are limited to 30 minutes and each remark is limited to three minutes.
*** Pursuant to 1 CMC §9912, the CUC Board of Directors may vote to meet at any time in executive session, to consult with the Legal Counsel on matters deemed privileged and confidential. 3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan

Northern Marianas Technical Institute
12966 Lower Base Dr.
PO BOX 504880 Saipan, MP 96950

Board of Trustees
Regular Board Meeting
November 25, 2024 | 4:00PM
NMTech Conference Room

MEETING AGENDA

I. Call to Order
II. Adoption of Agenda - November 25, 2024
III. Adoption of Meeting Minutes - October 2, 2024
IV. Public Comments
V. Old Business
  a. New Bank Account
  b. NMTech Foundation
    i. Identification of Board Members
    ii. Asia Pacific Association for Fiduciary Studies (APAFS) Conference
  c. Completed Lower Base Campus Appraisal
    i. Property and Premises Liability Proposal
VI. New Business
  a. After Action Report - Operation Fachi
  b. Flood Mitigation Projects | Phases
  c. Leadership Retreat
VII. Committee Updates
  a. EDA Project Updates
  b. EIC | MAP Project Updates
  c. Subaward Grant Updates - Special Programs
  d. Culinary Arts Programs
    i. Advisory Committee
    ii. Full-time Instructor
VIII. Executive Session
IX. Announcements
  a. Staff Highlights
  b. New Programs in Spring 2025
  c. Employee Appreciation Event
X. Adjournment

PUBLIC NOTICE

In accordance with the "Open Government Act", the Public School System State Board of Education, through their Special Education State Advisory Panel (SESAP), is hereby serving notice to the general public that it will hold its **1st Quarter Meeting on Monday, November 25, 2024** from **10:00am to 1:30pm at the Sunflower Room, World Resort, Saipan.** This meeting is open to the public, interested individuals are welcome.

AGENDA

I. Preliminary Matters
  Roll Call
  Presence of a Quorum
  Adoption of Agenda
  Adoption of Minutes
  - November 25, 2019

II. Welcoming and Introduction - *Commissioner Lawrence F. Camacho*

III. Member Orientation – IDEA Roles and Responsibilities

IV. Special Education Program Updates
  a. IDEA Annual Determination
  b. State Performance Plan & Annual Performance Report

V. Election of Officers

VI. Miscellaneous
  a. Next Meeting: January 29, 2025

VII. Adjournment

In compliance with the American Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals who wish to attend this meeting, but require accessibility such as large print or sign language interpreters must call 237-3029/3012. Several days notice is necessary to allow organizers ample time to make necessary arrangements.

/S/ Donna Flores
Secretary

/S/ Donna Flores
Director, Special Education Program

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

John Thune must protect the Senate from Donald Trump

In choosing South Dakota's John Thune as their new leader, Senate Republicans appear to have recognized a crucial truth: It is in their party's interest to be led by a Donald Trump supporter but not a sycophant. The fate of Trump's second term hinges in no small part on whether Thune proves to have at least as much fortitude as the man he's succeeding.

In his years as majority leader, Mitch McConnell reliably supported Trump's agenda, yet he wasn't a lap dog. He understood that the U.S. system of checks and balances requires Congress to be independent of the executive branch. At important moments, McConnell led the Senate in breaking with Trump, including by sanctioning Russia for election interference over Trump's objections, rebuking Trump's "precipitous withdrawal" of troops from Syria and Afghanistan, refusing his entreaties to scrap the filibuster or "postpone" Election Day, condemning the Jan. 6 riot, and, during Trump's last month in office, overriding his veto of a defense bill.

For these and other displays of independence, McConnell was subject to withering attacks from Trump, but he became adept at holding his ground without trading insults. That skill is one his successor will need to emulate.

Thune, like McConnell, is a proponent of free trade and a supporter of Ukraine's effort to defend itself against Russia's invasion. Like McConnell, Thune accepted the results of the 2020 election and didn't join the many congressional Republicans who attempted to block the certification of electoral votes. He also shares McConnell's commitment to the filibuster.

As Trump reenters the White House, Thune's job won't be easy. His first test will be considering Trump's nominees for the cabinet and other high-ranking positions. Some will be qualified and should be confirmed quickly. Others will require rather more scrutiny. And some, as is already clear, will be completely unfit and should be rejected.

Whoever the nominees are, Thune should ignore Trump's demand that the Senate bypass the usual nomination process. Under the Constitution, the president may appoint officials without confirmation while the Senate is in recess, and those nominees can serve out the remainder of the congressional session. Thune shouldn't let Trump abuse the power. As Alexander Hamilton wrote in Federalist No. 76, Senate confirmation is "an excellent check upon a spirit of favoritism in the President, and would tend greatly to prevent the appointment of unfit characters." (See Trump's plan to appoint now-former Representative Matt Gaetz as attorney general.)

Trump aside, Thune has an opportunity to advance prudent legislation. With thin majorities in both the House and Senate, Republicans will need to have moderates (or Democrats) on board to enact much of an agenda. Any deals they make—including over government funding, a new farm bill or a debt-ceiling extension—should prioritize economic growth while recognizing that the days of limitless government spending need to come to an end.

Responding to Trump is a challenge for anyone in government, but the position of majority leader is especially influential. In defending the Senate's independence and norms, McConnell has sometimes buckled, but he leaves office with the Constitution intact. For Thune to one day say the same, he'll need to follow his predecessor's lead.

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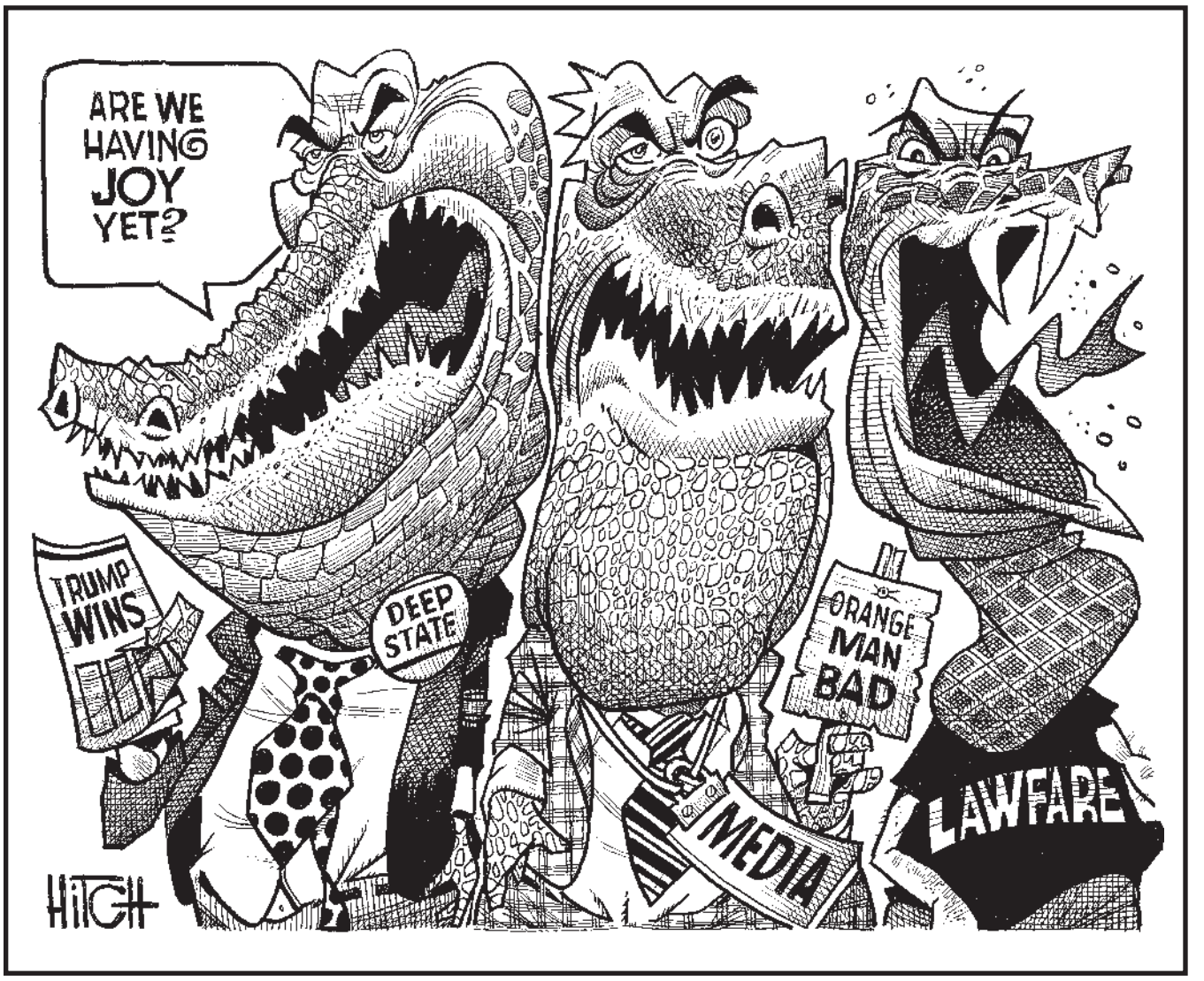


Feeling hopeless since the election? Experiencing grief over a political loss is valid

By ROBIN EPLEY
The Sacramento Bee

If you—like me—were deeply disappointed in the direction this country and our state went on Election Day, then you—like me—have probably felt emotionally drained for the last week or so.

I fell into a fitful sleep in the wee hours of the morning after the election as it looked increasingly clear that former President Donald Trump would be reelected, complete with nightmares. Yet as I woke up to the certain news that Trump had indeed won, the sadness I was experiencing felt familiar, and not in a Feels-Like-2016-All-Over-Again kind of way.

Crying, depression, disbelief, numbness and even denial are all hallmarks of a valid, deeply human emotion that most people probably would not associate with politics: Profound grief.

"Grief is basically a sense of loss that a person has for something that is meaningful to them, and that sense of loss can have a whole bunch of emotions associated with that," said Dr. Hendry Ton, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Health Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at UC Davis Health.

While grief is more commonly associated with the death of a loved one, Ton said, grief is also a common reaction to the loss of your hopes and expectations for the future. And when the grief is over something intangible or as ambiguous as an election, it can become even more complex.

"When you lose someone, you're able to see their body. (It) can be incredibly painful, but it offers a sense of closure," Ton said. "When you're not able to pinpoint things, then you're not able to deal with it and you're not able to process it … The grief of post-election, I think a lot of people (are) grieving for the loss of what you had hoped the future would be, and your investment in that."

Election grief is bipartisan, though often not at the same time; everyone can relate to experiencing a loss on Election Night and the sadness that comes after hopes for the future are quashed.

For those mourning the results of this particular election, the loss of the future they'd hoped for could have included affordable health care, real action on climate change, protection of rights for the LGBTQ+ community and immigrants, the return of our reproductive rights, or even the dream of America's first female president.

You could also be in mourning for all the effort you put into securing that much-hoped-for future.

When I traveled to Reno a few weeks ago with more than 150 Democratic canvassers, many expressed their frustration of feeling like they hadn't done enough to stop the first Trump Administration. If you participated in phone banking, wrote letters or walked precincts for weeks and months before the election — only to watch all your efforts crumble on Nov. 5—it's natural that you'd be pretty depressed about it.

"A lot of people, particularly in this election, they put a lot of energy into thinking about it (and) watching a lot about it," Ton said. "So there was this sense of, not only a loss of the future, but also a questioning of like, 'Did I get it wrong?'"

Grief often leads to a feeling of isolation which is usually remedied by seeking out community—typically our family and friends—for support. But with a country so divided, there's a hesitancy present that is typically not a problem when simply dealing with death.

"With the polls being very different than the actual results, it leads people to question, 'Who can I express my grief to?'" Ton said. "When you don't know, or when there's a lot of division within the community, your circles are smaller. And that complicates the grieving process as well, because you're questioning your support system."

The good news, I suppose, is that grief is a well-documented process with recognizable symptoms and recommended coping mechanisms—though it's not quite as simple as just moving through the stages of grief like it's a checklist. The most important thing in the early days of a loss is to have some self-compassion for yourself, Ton said.

"Grief is a process. And the first part of the process is denial, being stunned or being numb," he said. "Some people may beat them-

See FEELING on Page 7

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

What will Donald Trump's second term really be like?

By JOHN M. CRISP
Tribune News Service

John M. Crisp is an op-ed columnist for Tribune News Service.

Count me among the many who have carefully observed Donald Trump's first days as president-elect for hints about what his presidency will be like.

It's odd that this question is still on the table after Trump's near-decade close to the center of American political life and his four years in the White House. And during the campaign, Trump didn't mince words about his plans for a second administration. He was elected in 2016 as a disruptor, and his reelection in 2024 implies that Americans are amenable to more disruption. The most prominent watchwords of his campaign suggest that Trump will give them what they seem to want: mass deportation, massive tariffs, close the border, abolish Obamacare, the end of woke, America First and, most ominous, retribution.

One thing that Trump supporters say they like about him is that he says what he means and means what he says. Still, I suspect that many Americans voted for him while harboring the assumption that he's really not going to do everything that he says he is.

For example, will he really use the National Guard and military to raid businesses, schools and homes to round up 20 to 25 million undocumented immigrants (the real figure is closer to 11 million) and confine them in holding camps until they can be deported to their home countries?

Trump was emphatic about this, but questions remain: Do Americans actually have the stomach for this flagrant use of force against millions of people, nearly all of whom—while certainly illegal—are just working hard to make a better life for their families? What will happen when the idea of mass deportation collides with the practicality and expense of such a policy? Will the Trump administration begin to listen to the many economists who argue—quite reasonably—that the abrupt removal of even part of our nation's large undocumented workforce will have significant inflationary effects on our economy?

What about Trump's promise of retribution? During the campaign, Trump was clear about his intention to impose revenge on his political opponents. Among many other threats, last year Trump said, "I will appoint a real special prosecutor to go after the most corrupt president in the history of the United States of America, Joe Biden, and the entire Biden crime family."

The Trump campaign, realizing the recklessness of such a threat, walked it back, arguing that Trump's retribution will be a successful administration.

Still, one wonders. On the Sunday after the election, former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, who's known Trump for 22 years, said that Trump has an essential instinct for retribution. On the other hand, Trump also wants "to be loved," which, according to Christie, will work against Trump's instinct for retribution. But if the election is any indicator, millions of Americans are on board with Trump's retribution and they would reward him with love for attacking his political rivals.

Further, Trump's Cabinet picks indicate the seriousness of his threat of mass deportation: Former acting ICE director Tom Homan, who advocated for separating children from their undocumented parents, "will be in charge of all Deportation of Illegal Aliens back to their Country of Origin," Trump announced on social media. And Stephen Miller, nominated for deputy chief of staff, is well-known for his intense anti-immigration attitudes.

And if retribution is Trump's goal, who better to pursue it than the volatile, but intensely loyal, man-child Matt Gaetz as his attorney general? If Trump sends Gaetz after his political rivals, we can be sure he won't hesitate, nor be restrained by the slightest scruple.

In short, nearly half the country voted against what Trump said he will do when he gets into office. A significant portion of the other half voted for Trump with the expectation that he won't do everything he says he will. Another significant portion of the majority of voters hopes he does.

So, at this point, we can't be certain what Trump will do when his term starts. Even Trump may be unsure about how far he plans to go.

Bird flu is about to crash flu season. It could get ugly

By LISA JARVIS
Bloomberg Opinion

Lisa Jarvis is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering biotech, health care and the pharmaceutical industry. Previously, she was executive editor of Chemical & Engineering News.

It's been nearly eight months since avian flu was first detected in U.S. dairy herds, and cases in both cows and humans continue to pile up.

That slow burn of infections through our nation's livestock, a new vessel for the virus, has never been good for public health. It creates more chances for the H5N1 virus to change in ways that put humans at risk. But the ongoing spread among dairy cattle—and to a limited number of farm workers—gets more anxiety-inducing as we head into the winter flu season.

The will from public health agencies to slow the virus has clearly been outmatched by its stubborn persistence to circulate. Of the 505 confirmed infected herds since the start of the outbreak, 201 were detected in the last month—nearly all of them in California, where H5N1 is tearing its way through dairy farms.

"Even though we had seven months to investigate how this virus is spreading in dairy cows, we haven't really been able to stem that spread—and California is just the most recent example of that," says Andrew Pekosz, professor of molecular microbiology and immunology at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. "And every cow farm it infects, that's one more batch of humans who work on that farm at risk of infection."

So far, 46 people have tested positive for H5N1 in the U.S. in 2024, but the lack of widespread testing among farm workers has made many infectious disease experts worried the actual number of cases could be much higher. That's because most people have experienced relatively mild symptoms, like pink eye, that could easily be confused with allergies or a cold. Coupled with the reality that many farm workers are far less likely to seek care—they often lack insurance or sick leave, and might be hesitant because of their immigration status—you have a recipe for unnoticed infections.

And, indeed, a recent study from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found cases are going undetected. Researchers collected blood samples from 115 farm workers at dairies in Michigan and Colorado with confirmed H5N1 outbreaks to look for evidence of a past infection. Eight people (or 7%), all of whom had either milked cows or cleaned the milking parlor, had antibodies against the virus.

On some level, the finding should come as no surprise. Studies of earlier H5N1 outbreaks outside the U.S. found similar rates of asymptomatic or undetected infections. Meanwhile, testing among farm workers was practically nonexistent in the early part of the outbreak.

Still, this evidence of missed cases is surfacing as the U.S. heads into a risky time for avian flu to be spreading. Although seasonal flu activity is currently low, it'll eventually pick up. That creates a potential new avenue for the viral genome to change: reassortment, a process in which theH5N1 virus could swap genetic bits with the seasonal flu virus to create something more dangerous. "Where this gets really scary is the possibility of reassortment," says Angela Rasmussen, a virologist with the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization at the University of Saskatchewan.

Here's how it works: After a virus infects us, it hijacks our cellular machinery to churn out lots of copies of itself. For an influenza virus, that involves making eight separate segments of RNA, which are stitched together into its complete genome. If someone is infected with both H5N1 and seasonal flu, some of those segments could get stitched into the wrong genome. The fear is that one of those genomic shuffles could empower the virus to more easily infect humans or make them sicker. (By the way, scientists also worry about this type of reassortment happening in pigs, which have receptors on their cells that are similar to both birds and humans—that's why everyone was freaking out last month over the first H5N1 infection in swine.)

"It's very concerning that you have a population that has less access to healthcare, perhaps is being discouraged from getting tested for any kind of influenza at all, going into a flu season where we know they're vulnerable to getting infected," Rasmussen says. "That creates a much higher risk for a reassortment."

How can we avoid that? Reining in the spread in cows is the most obvious solution, though one that seems out of reach given the ongoing lack of will to take more stringent measures to protect herds and workers. We should worry, too, that the incoming Trump administration and its promised shake up of the CDC and other health agencies could hamper ongoing efforts to contain the virus.

The study on previous infections did prompt the CDC to do something it should have done months ago: Recommend that any farm worker exposed to a sick animal be tested for influenza A. The agency also said workers with a high-risk exposure to an infected cow should be offered the antiviral Tamiflu, even if they don't have symptoms.

One very easy way to lower the chances of a genetic shuffling would be for everyone, but especially farm workers, to get vaccinated against seasonal flu. The CDC has provided thousands of free flu shots to states that have reported infected herds and has partnered with an organization doing education and vaccine clinics in various parts of the country.

The rest of us should get our flu vaccines, too. It reduces your risk of seasonal flu, of course (a worthy goal!). But two separate cases of individuals hospitalized with H5N1 with no known connection to livestock or infected birds are a reminder that there is a ton of avian flu still circulating in wildlife—and humans can be infected by touching or eating an infected animal. Those cases are rare, but they happen.

So far we have been lucky that the virus circulating in cows has yet to adapt to become something scarier. But luck is no substitute for a rational public health plan, and we should be taking every step possible to minimize our risks.

FEELING

From page 6

selves up because they may be saying, 'Why am I not doing anything about it right now?' Well, that is part of the grieving process."

Give yourself a break if you're in shock, Ton added. "Remember this is a process, and in that process, there may be times where you're ready to engage with others, and then there may be times where you need to just be less socially stimulated and have some peace."

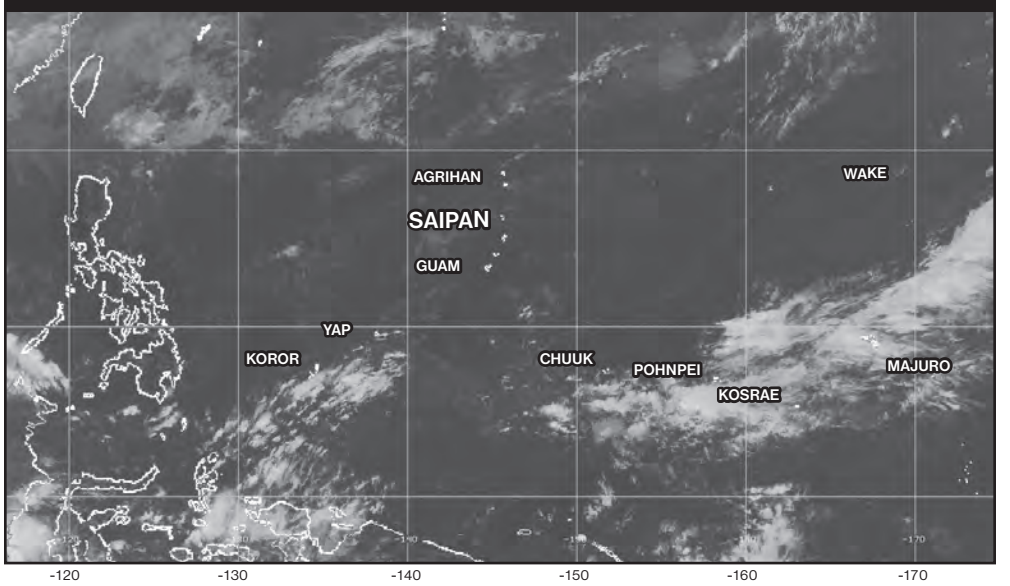
I definitely felt in shock after the results of Nov. 5, but as more time passes, I feel more able to confront the future; even one I very much hoped wouldn't happen. Part of that has been giving myself a break and time to process the news. And like my grief for lost family members, I know it'll get easier with time and practicing kindness toward myself and others going through the same grieving process.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Isolated showers. Mostly sunny. East wind 11 to 14 mph, with gusts as high as 18 mph.	Isolated showers. Mostly sunny. East wind 11 to 14 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.	Mostly sunny.	Mostly sunny.	Mostly sunny.
86° / 77°	87° / 77°	87° / 77°	88° / 77°	88° / 77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 5:55 AM WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2024

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Weather looks to remain fairly dry through the weekend at least. Main thing to watch out for in the Marianas will be marine conditions next week. Went ahead and did some work on these, unusual on the night shift, because the ECMWF-Wave wave heights were a foot or two higher than the current grids. So, have started the process of messaging that high surf and/or small craft advisories are a possibility next week as a substantial north swell comes down. Moreover, the models tend to understimate these north swell events, so the end result could be even bigger.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Fair	88° / 79°
Palau	Partly Cloudy	84° / 77°
Yap	Mostly Sunny	85° / 79°
Chuuk	Sunny	86° / 79°
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	85° / 77°
Kosrae	Cloudy	85° / 77°
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	84° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:21 AM	5:43 PM
Friday	6:22 AM	5:43 PM
Saturday	6:22 AM	5:43 PM
Sunday	6:23 AM	5:43 PM
Monday	6:23 AM	5:43 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	11:19 AM	10:53 PM
Friday	-	12:02 PM	11:46 PM
Saturday	-	12:40 PM	-
Sunday	12:34 AM	1:15 PM	-
Monday	1:21 AM	1:48 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	70° / 57°
Beijing	Fair	53° / 30°
Hong Kong	Rain	67° / 61°
Honolulu	Fair	81° / 74°
London	Mostly Cloudy	52° / 46°
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	69° / 56°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	93° / 78°
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	82° / 61°
Miami	Rain	77° / 72°
New York	Showers in the Vicinity	59° / 47°
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	61° / 48°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	52° / 43°
Busan	Partly Cloudy	57° / 42°
Rome	Sunny	59° / 41°
Salem	Mostly Sunny	59° / 42°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	59° / 52°
Seoul	Cloudy	51° / 30°
Tokyo	Rain	55° / 44°
Washington, DC	Cloudy	61° / 53°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
5:28 AM	Low Tide	-0.38
1:25 PM	High Tide	1.66
6:52 PM	Low Tide	1.20
10:23 PM	High Tide	1.40

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2024

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	1:20PM	4:00PM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily
UA193	7:55PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA076/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	2:30AM	6:25AM	Daily
7C3212	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

HX77	3:05AM	5:55AM	1, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:50AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	5:30PM	10:05PM	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	00:40AM	6:25AM	3, 6
PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA184	10:55PM	4:40AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184	00:40AM	8:50AM	3, 6 via Guam
UA192/174	10:40PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	10:55PM	8:50AM +1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
7C2306/3407	11:20PM	3:30PM+1	Daily

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3211	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
TW307	8:00PM	1:30AM+1	Daily

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

HX76	6:25PM	1:35AM+1	4, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

Nation

Here are the people Trump has picked for key positions so far

President-elect Donald Trump is filling key posts in his second administration, and it's shaping up much differently than his first. He's prioritizing loyalists for top jobs.

Trump was bruised and hampered by internal squabbles during his initial term in office. Now he appears focused on remaking the federal government in his own image. Some of his choices could face difficult confirmation battles even with Republicans in control of the U.S. Senate.

Here's a look at whom he has selected so far.

Cabinet nominees:

SECRETARY OF STATE: Marco Rubio

Trump named Florida Sen. Marco Rubio to be secretary of state, making the critic-turned-ally his choice for top diplomat.

Rubio, 53, is a noted hawk on China, Cuba and Iran, and was a finalist to be Trump's running mate on the Republican ticket last summer. Rubio is the vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee and a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The announcement punctuates the hard pivot Rubio has made with Trump, whom the senator once called a "con man" during his unsuccessful campaign for the 2016 Republican presidential nomination.

Their relationship improved dramatically while Trump was in the White House. And as Trump campaigned for the presidency a third time, Rubio cheered his proposals. For instance, Rubio, who more than a decade ago helped craft immigration legislation that included a path to citizenship for people in the U.S. illegally, now supports Trump's plan to use the U.S. military for mass deportations.

ATTORNEY GENERAL: Matt Gaetz

Trump said Wednesday he will nominate Florida Rep. Matt Gaetz to serve as his attorney general, naming a loyalist in the role of the nation's top prosecutor.

In selecting Gaetz, 42, Trump passed over more established lawyers whose names had been mentioned as being contenders for the job.

"Matt will end Weaponized Government, protect our Borders, dismantle Criminal Organizations and Restore Americans' badly-shattered Faith and Confidence in the Justice Department," Trump said in a statement.

Gaetz resigned from Congress after Trump announced him. The House Ethics Committee has been investigating an allegation that Gaetz paid for sex with a 17-year-old, though that probe effectively ended when he resigned. Gaetz has denied any wrongdoing.

DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE: Tulsi Gabbard

Former Hawaii Rep. Tulsi Gabbard has been tapped by Trump to be director of national intelligence, another example of Trump prizing loyalty over experience.

Gabbard, 43, was a Democratic House member who unsuccessfully sought the party's 2020 presidential nomination before leaving the party in 2022. She endorsed Trump in August and campaigned often with him this fall, and she's been accused of echoing Russian propaganda.

Gabbard, who has served in the Army National Guard for more than two decades, deploying to Iraq and Kuwait, would come to the role as an outsider compared to her predecessor. The current director, Avril Haines, was confirmed by the Senate in 2021 following several years in a number of top national security and intelligence positions.

DEFENSE SECRETARY: Pete Hegseth

Hegseth, 44, was a co-host of Fox News Channel's "Fox and Friends Weekend" and has been a contributor with the network since 2014. He developed a friendship with Trump, who made regular appearances on the show.

Hegseth served in the Army National Guard from 2002 to 2021, deploying to Iraq in 2005 and Afghanistan in 2011. He has two Bronze Stars. However, Hegseth lacks senior military and national security experience. If confirmed by the Senate, he would inherit the top job during a series of global crises — ranging from Russia's war in Ukraine and the ongoing attacks in the Middle East by Iranian proxies to the push for a cease-fire between Israel, Hamas and Hezbollah and escalating worries about the growing alliance between Russia and North Korea.

Hegseth is also the author of "The War on Warriors: Behind the Betrayal of the Men Who Keep Us Free," published earlier this year.

AP

Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump arrives at an election night watch party at the Palm Beach Convention Center, Wednesday, Nov. 6, 2024, in West Palm Beach, Fla.

COMMERCE SECRETARY: Howard Lutnick

Lutnick heads up the brokerage and investment bank Cantor Fitzgerald and is a cryptocurrency enthusiast. He is co-chair of Trump's transition operation, charged along with Linda McMahon, a former wrestling executive who previously led Trump's Small Business Administration, with helping the president-elect build a Cabinet for his second administration.

As commerce secretary, Lutnick would play a key role in carrying out Trump's plans to raise and enforce tariffs. He would oversee a sprawling Cabinet department whose oversight ranges from funding new computer chip factories and imposing trade restrictions to releasing economic data and monitoring the weather.

HOMELAND SECURITY SECRETARY: Kristi Noem

Noem is a well-known conservative who used her two terms as South Dakota's governor to vault to a prominent position in Republican politics.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Noem did not order restrictions that other states had issued and instead declared her state "open for business." Trump held a fireworks rally at Mount Rushmore in July 2020 in one of the first large gatherings of the pandemic.

More recently, Noem faced sharp criticism for telling a story in her memoir about shooting and killing her dog.

She is set to lead a department crucial to the president-elect's hardline immigration agenda as well as other missions. Homeland Security oversees natural disaster response, the U.S. Secret Service and Transportation Security Administration agents who work at airports.

CIA DIRECTOR: John Ratcliffe

Ratcliffe, a former U.S. House member from Texas, was director of national intelligence during the final year and a half of Trump's first term, leading the U.S. government's spy agencies during the coronavirus pandemic.

If confirmed, Ratcliffe will have held the highest intelligence positions in the U.S.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES SECRETARY: Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

Kennedy ran for president as a Democrat, then as an independent, and then endorsed Trump. He's the son of Democratic icon Robert Kennedy, who was assassinated during his own presidential campaign.

The nomination alarmed people who are concerned about his record of spreading unfounded fears about vaccines. For example, he has long advanced the debunked idea that vaccines cause autism.

TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY: Sean Duffy

Duffy is a former House member from Wisconsin who was one of Trump's most visible defenders on cable news. Duffy served in the House for nearly nine years, sitting on the Financial Services Committee and chairing the subcommittee on insurance and housing. He left Congress in 2019 for a TV career and has been the host of "The Bottom Line" on Fox Business.

Before entering politics, Duffy was a reality TV star on MTV, where he met his wife, "Fox and Friends Weekend" co-host Rachel Campos-Duffy. They have nine children.

VETERANS AFFAIRS SECRETARY: Doug Collins

Collins is a former Republican congressman from Georgia who gained recognition for defending Trump during his first impeachment trial, which centered on U.S. assistance for Ukraine. Trump was impeached for urging Ukraine to investigate Joe Biden in 2019 during the Democratic presidential nomination, but he was acquitted by the Senate.

Collins has also served in the armed forces himself and is currently a chaplain in the United States Air Force Reserve Command.

INTERIOR SECRETARY: Doug Burgum

The governor of North Dakota, once little-known outside his state, is a former Republican presidential primary contender who endorsed Trump and then spent months traveling to drum up support for Trump after dropping out of the race.

Burgum was a serious contender to be Trump's vice presidential choice this summer. The two-term governor was seen as a possible pick because of his executive experience and business savvy. Burgum also has close ties to deep-pocketed energy industry CEOs.

Trump initially announced his choice of Burgum while addressing a gala at his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida. His formal announcement the following day said he wanted Burgum to be Interior secretary and chairman of a new National Energy Council. Burgun will also have a seat on the National Security Council, which would be a first for the Interior secretary.

ENERGY SECRETARY: Chris Wright

A campaign donor and CEO of Denver-based Liberty Energy, Write is a vocal advocate of oil and gas development, including fracking — a key pillar of Trump's quest to achieve U.S. "energy dominance" in the global market.

Wright also has been one of the industry's loudest voices against efforts to fight climate change. He said the climate movement around the world is "collapsing under its own weight." The Energy Department is responsible for advancing energy, environmental and nuclear security of the United States.

Wright also won support from influential conservatives, including oil and gas tycoon Harold Hamm. Hamm, executive chairman of Oklahoma-based Continental Resources, a major shale oil company, is a longtime Trump supporter and adviser who played a key role on energy issues in Trump's first term.

EDUCATION SECRETARY: Linda McMahon

McMahon, a billionaire professional wrestling mogul, would be making a return appearance in a second Trump administration. She led the Small Business Administration from 2017 to 2019 during Trump's initial term and twice ran unsuccessfully as a Republican for the U.S. Senate in Connecticut. She served on the Connecticut Board of Education for a year starting in 2009 and has spent years on the board of trustees for Sacred Heart University in Connecticut. She has expressed support for charter schools and school choice.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR: Lee Zeldin

Zeldin does not appear to have any experience in environmental issues, but is a longtime supporter of the former president. The 44-year-old former U.S. House member from New York wrote on X, "We will restore US energy dominance, revitalize our auto industry to bring back American jobs, and make the US the global leader of AI."

"We will do so while protecting access to clean air and water," he added.

During his campaign, Trump often attacked the Biden administration's promotion of electric vehicles, and incorrectly referred to a tax credit for EV purchases as a government mandate. Trump also often told his audiences during the campaign that his administration would "drill, baby, drill," referring to his support for expanded petroleum exploration.

World

Ukraine fires several US-made longer-range missiles into Russia for 1st time

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Ukraine fired several American-supplied longer-range missiles into Russia, officials said Tuesday, marking the first time Kyiv used the weapons that way in 1,000 days of war.

The use of the Army Tactical Missile System, known as ATACMS, came as Russian President Vladimir Putin formally lowered the threshold for using nuclear weapons, opening the door to a potential nuclear response by Moscow to even a conventional attack by any nation supported by a nuclear power. That could include Ukrainian attacks backed by the U.S.

A Telegram channel affiliated with the Ukrainian military posted a video Tuesday that it says shows U.S.-supplied ATACMS missiles being fired from an undisclosed location in Ukraine. The Associated Press could not independently verify the date and location the video was filmed.

According to a U.S. official, Ukraine fired about eight of the missiles, and just two were intercepted by the Russians. The official said that the U.S. was still assessing battle damage, but that the missiles struck an ammunition supply location in Karachev, a city of about 18,000 people in Russia's Bryansk region. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence assessments.

AP

This image was made from a video posted by a Telegram channel affiliated with the Ukrainian military on Tuesday, Nov. 19, 2024.

The developments marked a worrying escalation in the conflict that has repeatedly ratcheted up international tensions. U.S. officials recently expressed dismay at Russia's deployment of North Korean troops to help it fight Ukraine, while Moscow seethed when Washington eased restrictions on the ATACMS in recent days.

The 1,000-day mark has magnified scrutiny of how the war is unfolding and how it might end, amid signs that a turning point may be coming with U.S. President-elect Donald Trump entering the White House in about two months' time. Trump has pledged to swiftly end the war and has criticized the amount the U.S. has spent on supporting Ukraine.

Neither Russia nor Ukraine can sustain the war for a long time, analysts say, though Russia would be able to keep going for longer due to its vaster resources.

Ukraine's forces are under severe Russian pressure on the battlefield at places on the about 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line where its army is stretched thin. Ukrainian civilians, meanwhile, have repeatedly been attacked by Russian drones and missiles.

Ukraine claimed Tuesday that it hit a military weapons depot in Russia's Bryansk region overnight, though it didn't specify what weapons it used. The Ukrainian General Staff said multiple explosions and detonations were heard in the targeted area around Karachev.

Asked at a news conference if Ukraine had struck the Bryansk region ammunition depot with ATACMS, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy declined to provide any details. However, he said, "Ukraine has long-range capabilities, including domestically produced long-range drones … and now we have ATACMS as well."

In a statement carried by Russian news agencies, the Russian Defense Ministry said the military shot down five ATACMS missiles and damaged one more. The fragments fell on the territory of an unspecified military facility and sparked a fire, but didn't cause any damage or casualties, it said.

Neither side's claims could be independently verified.

Karachev is roughly 115 kilometers (70 miles) from the Russia-Ukraine border. Ukraine in the course of the war has been able to reach much deeper into the vast country — but with drones rather than missiles. For instance, Russian officials have reported intercepting Ukrainian drones over Moscow, which is about 500 kilometers (310 miles) from the border and most recently Izhevsk, a city about 1,450 kilometers (900 miles) from the frontier.

Earlier on Tuesday, Ukrainian officials reported a third Russian strike in as many days on a residential area in Ukraine killed at least 12 people, including a child.

US envoy says Israel-Hezbollah truce is 'within our grasp'

BEIRUT (AP)—A United States envoy said an agreement to end the Israel-Hezbollah war is "within our grasp" after talks in Lebanon on Tuesday.

However, there was no such optimism in the Gaza Strip, where the looting of nearly 100 aid trucks by armed men worsened an already severe food crisis.

Amos Hochstein, the Biden administration's pointman on Israel and Lebanon, arrived as Hezbollah's allies in the Lebanese government said the militant group had responded positively to the proposal, which would entail both its fighters and Israeli ground forces withdrawing from a U.N. buffer zone in southern Lebanon.

The buffer zone would be policed by thousands of additional U.N. peacekeepers and Lebanese troops. Israel has called for a stronger enforcement mechanism, potentially including the ability to conduct military operations against any Hezbollah threats, something Lebanon is likely to oppose.

An Israeli airstrike on Tuesday hit a Lebanese army base in the southern town of Sarafand, killing three soldiers, the army said – the second deadly strike on Lebanese soldiers in as many days. The Israeli military did not immediately comment. At least 41 soldiers have been killed by Israeli bombardment the past month, according to the Lebanese army.

Hochstein said he held "very constructive talks" with Lebanon's Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, an ally of Hezbollah who is mediating on the group's behalf.

"Specifically today, we have continued to significantly narrow the gaps," the envoy told reporters after the two-hour meeting. "It's ultimately the decisions of the parties to reach a conclusion to this conflict. ... It is now within our grasp."

Berri said the "situation is good in principle," although some technical details remain unresolved. The Lebanese side was waiting to hear the results of Hochstein's talks with Israeli officials, he told the Asharq al-Awsat newspaper.

The United Nations humanitarian office says virtually no food or humanitarian aid has been delivered to northernmost Gaza for more than 40 days because of the Israeli military's siege there.

Experts say famine may already have set in in the north, where Israel has been waging a weekslong offensive that has killed hundreds of people and driven tens of thousands from their homes.

So far in November, OCHA reports that 27 out of 31 planned humanitarian missions to the north were rejected by Israel and the other four were severely impeded, U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said Tuesday. Devastated towns like Beit Hanoun, Beit Lahiya and parts of Jabaliya remain cut off, he said.

Asked whether the U.N. believes Israel is trying to force the estimated 75,000 Palestinians in northern Gaza to move south by denying the aid deliveries, Dujarric replied: "I can't speak to the intentions of the Israeli government and the Israeli policy. We're just seeing the result of it and trying to deal with it."

Israel says it puts no restrictions on the quantity of aid entering Gaza and that it is working to increase the amount. This month, it opened a new crossing into central Gaza. So far it has reported a few dozen trucks entering through it.

The flow of aid is at nearly the lowest level of the entire 13-month war. So far this month, Israel says it let into Gaza an average of 88 trucks a day – less than half the highest rate of the war, in April, which aid groups say was still too low.

From the aid that does enter, only about half actually reaches Palestinians because Israeli military restrictions and fears of theft often prevent the agency from collecting truck cargos at the border, according to UNRWA, the U.N. agency with the biggest role in the humanitarian operation.

WORLD BRIEFS

Iran defies international pressure, increasing its stockpile of near weapons-grade uranium, UN says

VIENNA (AP)—Iran has defied international demands to rein in its nuclear program and has increased its stockpile of uranium enriched to near weapons-grade levels, according to a confidential report by the United Nations' nuclear watchdog seen Tuesday by The Associated Press. The report by the International Atomic Energy Agency said that as of Oct. 26, Iran has 182.3 kilograms (401.9 pounds) of uranium enriched up to 60%, an increase of 17.6 kilograms (38.8 pounds) since the last report in August. Uranium enriched at 60% purity is just a short, technical step away from weapons-grade levels of 90%. The IAEA also estimated in its quarterly report that as of Oct. 26, Iran's overall stockpile of enriched uranium stands at 6,604.4 kilograms (14,560 pounds), an increase of 852.6 kilograms (1,879.6 pounds) since August. Under the IAEA's definition, around 42 kilograms (92.5 pounds) of uranium enriched to 60% purity is the amount at which creating one atomic weapon is theoretically possible—if the material is enriched further, to 90%. The reports come at a critical time as Israel and Iran have traded missile attacks in recent months after more than a year of war in Gaza, which is governed by Hamas, a group supported by Iran.

Southeast Asian defense chiefs meet in Laos as maritime disputes with China are flaring

VIENTIANE, Laos (AP)—Southeast Asian defense chiefs and representatives are meeting in the Laotian capital on Wednesday for security talks at a time of increasing maritime disputes with China in the Asia-Pacific and as the transition to a new U.S. president looms. U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin was set to join the meetings of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations defense ministers in Vientiane, where many will be looking for assurances ahead of President-elect Donald Trump's return to power in January. Austin just wrapped up meetings in Australia with officials there and Japan's defense minister, where they pledged their ongoing support for ASEAN and their "serious concern about destabilizing actions in the East and South China Seas, including dangerous conduct by the People's Republic of China against Philippines and other coastal state vessels." In addition to the United States, other nations attending the two-day ASEAN meetings include Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and China. Along with the Philippines, ASEAN member states Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei all have competing claims with China in the South China Sea, which Beijing claims almost in entirety as its own territory.

Life & Style

How a viral, duct-taped banana came to be worth $1M

NEW YORK (AP)—Walk into any supermarket and you can generally buy a banana for less than $1. But a banana duct-taped to a wall? That might sell for more than $1 million at an upcoming auction at Sotheby's in New York.

The yellow banana fixed to the white wall with silver duct tape is a work entitled "Comedian," by Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan. It first debuted in 2019 as an edition of three fruits at the Art Basel Miami Beach fair, where it became a much-discussed sensation.

Was it a prank? A commentary on the state of the art world? Another artist took the banana off the wall and ate it. A backup banana was brought in. Selfie-seeking crowds became so thick, "Comedian" was withdrawn from view, but three editions of it sold for between $120,000 and $150,000, according to Perrotin gallery.

Now, the conceptual artwork has an estimated value of between $1 million and $1.5 million at Sotheby's auction on Nov. 20. Sotheby's head of contemporary art, David Galperin, calls it profound and provocative.

"What Cattelan is really doing is turning a mirror to the contemporary art world and asking questions, provoking thought about how we ascribe value to artworks, what we define as an artwork," Galperin said.

Bidders won't be buying the same fruit that was on display in Miami. Those bananas are long gone. Sotheby's says the fruit always was meant to be replaced regularly, along with the tape.

AP

A woman looks at artist Maurizio Cattelan's piece of art "Comedian" during an auction preview at Sotheby's in New York, Monday, Nov. 11, 2024.

"What you buy when you buy Cattelan's 'Comedian' is not the banana itself, but a certificate of authenticity that grants the owner the permission and authority to reproduce this banana and duct tape on their wall as an original artwork by Maurizio Cattelan," Galperin said.

The very title of the piece suggests Cattelan himself likely didn't intend for it to be taken seriously. But Chloé Cooper Jones, an associate professor at the Columbia University School of the Arts, said it is worth thinking about the context.

Cattelan premiered the work at an art fair, visited by well-off art collectors, where "Comedian" was sure to get a lot of attention on social media. That might mean the art constituted a dare, of sorts, to the collectors to invest in something absurd, she said.

If "Comedian" is just a tool for understanding the insular, capitalist, art-collecting world, Cooper Jones said, "it's not that interesting of an idea."

But she thinks it might go beyond poking fun at rich people.

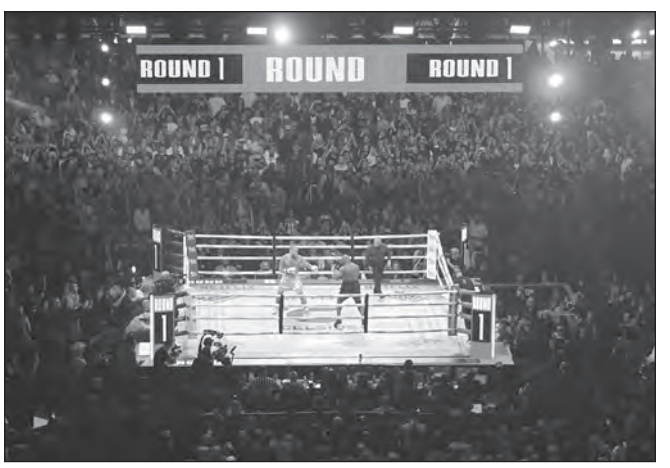
Cattelan is often thought of as a "trickster artist," she said. "But his work is often at the intersection of the sort of humor and the deeply macabre. He's quite often looking at ways of provoking us, not just for the sake of provocation, but to ask us to look into some of the sort of darkest parts of history and of ourselves."

Paul-Tyson was highest-grossing combat event in Texas at $18.1M, organizers say

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP)—Jake Paul's unanimous decision over Mike Tyson was the highest-grossing combat sports event in Texas at $18.1 million, the promotions company co-founded by Paul said Tuesday.

The eight-round fight at the home of the Dallas Cowboys drew about 72,000 fans and was part of a co-main event that featured Katie Taylor's latest disputed decision in a super lightweight championship slugfest against Amanda Serrano.

The event surpassed Texas' previous sports combat high of $9 million set by Canelo Alvarez when he faced Billy Joe Saunders at 80,000-seat AT&T Stadium in 2021, according to Most Valuable Promotions.



AP

Jake Paul, left, and Mike Tyson fight during their heavyweight boxing match, Friday, Nov. 15, 2024, in Arlington, Texas

There were 73,000-plus fans at the Alvarez-Saunders fight, which at the time was the biggest crowd for a U.S. sporting event since the start of the pandemic a year earlier.

Paul beat Tyson, the 58-year-old former heavyweight champion, in a lopsided decision, winning all but one round on the three judges' scorecards combined. It was the 11th victory in 12 fights for the YouTuber-turned-boxer, who has seven knockouts in 4 1/2 years since turning pro.

BetMGM said the fight was its most-bet boxing or mixed-martial arts fight, taking three times the number of bets and four times the money of any combat sport in the sportsbook's history. A Caesars Sportsbook official said the fight was on par with an NFL Monday night game.

Netflix reported a peak of 65 million viewers in the streaming platform's debut for live sporting events. Netflix is carrying two NFL games on Christmas Day and WWE "Raw" on Jan. 6.

Prosecutors ordered not to use papers taken from Combs' jail cell for now

NEW YORK (AP)—A federal judge ordered prosecutors Tuesday not to use papers taken from the jail cell of Sean "Diddy" Combs until he rules on defense claims that they are trial preparation materials protected by attorney-client privilege.

Judge Arun Subramanian made his ruling at a Manhattan federal court hearing after lawyers fiercely disputed the circumstances and relevance of the seizure of 19 pages that were photographed by an investigator inside the cell of the music mogul.

Combs, who has pleaded not guilty to all charges, is accused of coercing and abusing women for years with the aid of a network of associates and employees.

The seizure came during what the government has described as a multi-day sweep of all cells at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn, intended to remove any weapons or contraband as an anti-violence measure.

Defense lawyer Marc Agnifilo said he may ask the judge to dismiss the indictment or force a recusal of prosecutors if the judge rules that the materials were obtained and used improperly.

Combs, who hugged his lawyers when he first entered the courtroom, carried a stack of papers as he was led away at the end of the hearing.

Agnifilo said he was unaware that the papers in Combs' cell had been photographed by an investigator with the Bureau of Prisons and turned over to prosecutors until he saw them cited in written arguments opposing his $50 million bail proposal. A bail hearing is set for Friday.

Friendship with hiking buddy trips up marriage

DEAR ABBY
BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR ABBY: I'm a 64-year-old guy. I am single and have two daughters and four grandkids. A young woman ("Sarah"), who is my daughter's age, and I have been hiking buddies for the past five years. I treat her like my third daughter and a family member. Sarah is married, and her husband does not enjoy hiking. Her husband and my daughters accept our friendship and are happy that I found a person I can hike with.

I have been dating a lady ("Toni") who is close to my age. Six months ago, I suggested we should spend our lives together. My daughters and Sarah were happy for me. Toni rejected my proposal, citing that I must have some kind of romantic relationship with Sarah.

When I mentioned it to Sarah, she distanced from me. I think she thinks she may have interfered with my relationship with Toni. We're still friends but not like before. Should I talk to Sarah and ask why she distanced from me? I feel depressed about this and have some remorse. I should not have told her what Toni said.

HIKER IN COLORADO

DEAR HIKER: I don't think you did anything wrong by telling Sarah what Toni implied. You have a right to ask any question you wish of your hiking buddy. You won't know why your warm five-year relationship with her cooled unless you ask.

What I would like to know is whether you are still dating Toni after she rejected your proposal. If the answer is yes, do you plan to continue, knowing you have no future with her unless you find a male hiking buddy?

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I have had a friend who has been in my life and part of my group of friends' lives since high school. Years and years later, she has become increasingly negative toward all of us for no reason. Her husband is dying now, and we don't know how to handle it.

She has ghosted all of us because she's so full of hatred and negativity. We had decades of fun and memories, but she wants nothing to do with us. How do we handle the death of her husband? She says we are all phonies, which is all in her head.

PERPLEXED IN OHIO

DEAR PERPLEXED: How long has this woman been becoming "negative"? There may be a reason why she has changed. Her husband is sick and he's not going to get better. If she loves him and feels any responsibility to him at all, she's directing all of her energies in that direction.

The way to handle this would be for you longtime friends to step forward. Tell her you care. Volunteer to help in any way she will allow, and do not isolate her any more than she has isolated herself. If you haven't done that, I can see why she might have said she thought you were phonies.

■■■

Good advice for everyone—teens to seniors—is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

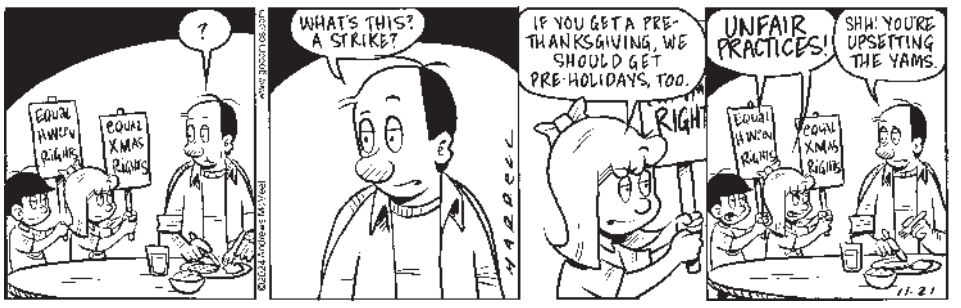
I'VE DECIDED I DON'T WANT TO BE FAMOUS.
NO?
NAH. ANY IDIOT CAN BE FAMOUS. I FIGURE I'M MORE THE LEGENDARY TYPE!
UH HUH.
WELL I DIDN'T MEAN RIGHT THIS SECOND!

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

ALTHOUGH LYING IS CONSIDERED TO BE WRONG, AND EVEN A SIN...
MANY PEOPLE FEEL THAT A LITTLE WHITE LIE IS OKAY IF IT SPARES SOMEONE'S FEELINGS.
YOU KNOW, THAT CONK MAKES YOU LOOK 5 YEARS YOUNGER.
GAH.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

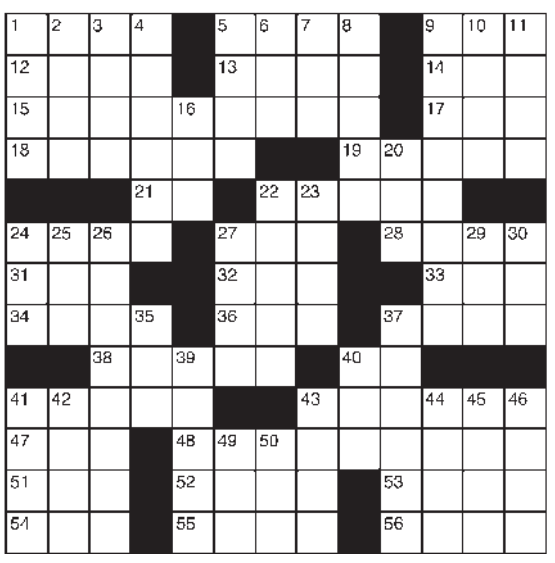
ACROSS
1 You love (Lat.)
5 — butter
9 Urban carrier
12 Hit on the noggin
13 Greet silently
14 Flamenco cheer
15 Church fund-raisers
17 Actress Salonga
18 Cholesterol medication
19 Wiser partner
21 LP successor
22 Manages somehow
24 Foot part
27 "Ben- —"
28 Ancient invader
31 Debtor's letters
32 Before
33 Swiss canton
34 Antelope's playmate
36 Motor homes
37 Lovers' quarrel
38 "I apologize!"
40 "Let It —"
41 Davis of "Jezebel"
43 Painter's motion
47 Brit. record label
48 Radio IDs
51 Robitaille of hockey
52 On the Baltic, say
53 Famed boxing family
54 Request
55 Oxen's burden
56 Jared of "Panic Room"

DOWN
1 Lessons for tots
2 Castle defense
3 "Diana" singer
4 Quick drawing
5 Graceful bird
6 Actor Linden
7 Adam's mate
8 Greek storyteller
9 Gazpacho, for one
10 Sheltered
11 Endure
16 Caesar or Vicious
20 Table support
22 S-shaped, as a road
23 Raw materials
24 Succor
25 Shad product
26 Pool hall item
27 German mister
29 La-la lead-in
30 Smack
35 Malarkey
37 — number
39 Summary
40 "Dynamite" band
41 Lugosi of film
42 Flightless birds
43 Shredded picnic dish
44 Leer at
45 Make mittens
46 Gas brand in Canada
49 Visual communication syst.
50 Zodiac feline

Solution time: 22 mins.

S	A	L	T	■	M	A	P	■	B	A	S	E
A	L	A	I	■	O	R	A	■	A	N	N	A
C	O	N	T	E	N	T	S	■	R	C	A	S
S	T	E	A	K	S	■	S	C	R	I	P	T
■	■	■	N	E	T	■	E	P	E	E	■	■
T	A	P	■	D	E	Y	■	A	N	N	O	Y
I	R	A	S	■	R	E	P	■	S	T	A	R
M	A	Y	I	M	■	N	O	W	■	S	T	S
■	■	■	M	E	H	E	■	W	A	S	■	■
C	R	E	S	I	S	■	E	S	P	O	S	A
L	E	N	T	■	S	E	R	P	E	N	T	S
A	L	T	A	■	E	M	U	■	A	C	A	I
M	O	S	S	■	N	O	P	■	K	E	N	S

Yesterday's answer 11-21



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Carly Rae Jepsen, 39; Jena Malone, 40; Michael Strahan, 53; Goldie Hawn, 79.

Happy Birthday: Hit the reset button and implement a strategy that promotes thought followed by action. By taking care of business before pleasure, you will relieve stress and enjoy downtime to the fullest. Turn your journey into something special. Follow the path that makes you feel alive, and designate more time to fill any void you encounter with love, knowledge and memorable experiences. Hard work will pay off, but risks will disappoint. Your numbers are 3, 12, 21, 28, 31, 35, 44.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Listen to reason, fact-check and get involved in activities that require drive, passion and resistance to make your way to the top. A competitive attitude will put you in the spotlight and encourage others to stand aside while you do your thing. Do what feels right. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* You'll face opposition if you are too forceful with your demands. A positive spin, a smile on your face and an incentive that's too good to turn down will make your journey easy. Honesty, integrity, compassion and fairness will promote stellar results and loyal connections. ✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Look at the big picture but refrain from feeling you must adhere to an all-or-nothing decision. Consider what you want and discard what isn't helpful. It's up to you to make changes that suit your needs. Speak up, be direct and counter with what works best for you. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Take your skills and knowledge to the next level. Whether you add to your qualifications or learn to apply your attributes uniquely, the outcome will boost your morale and reputation. Strive to get ahead, and you will be happy with the results. Romance is in the stars. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Participate in something that moves you mentally and emotionally. The insight you gain into others will help you decide with whom to spend your time. Become a powerhouse by acting and following through with your plans. Refuse to let the changes others make disrupt your plans. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Go somewhere new or inspirational, and let your mind wander. The images you conjure up will encourage you to do your part to positively impact your community, environment or the ones you love. Your discipline and attitude will attract favorable responses. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Communication, travel and gaining experience is in your best interest. Protect your health and home, but don't neglect to get out and enjoy what life offers. Personal growth is your ticket to solving problems and new beginnings. Trust your instincts and rely on your strengths. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Play to win. Know who and what you are up against and prepare accordingly. Step away from anyone asking for too much and offering too little. Mistakes will lead to anger and poor judgment. Shake yourself off if something goes wrong and compensate with positive action. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Get on the fast train and keep the momentum flowing until you are satisfied with the results. Let your competitive nature kick in, and you'll outmaneuver anyone who tries to get in your way. Consider the facts before you indicate your loyalty to someone else's plan. Action and passion are your strengths. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Size up what things cost and set a suitable budget. A change at home can save you time and money. Don't give power to someone else or take a risk that can cost you physically. Protect your money, health and position from anyone undermining you. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Put pressure where pressure is due. Refuse to let anyone take control if you want to secure your position or take responsibility for your own concerns. You can positively impact situations and those involved if you are honest and dedicated and devise a plan that is easy for others to adopt. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Study the manual and follow instructions carefully. Getting things right the first time will give your reputation and confidence a boost. Reach out to someone you admire; the response will lead to a positive exchange of ideas and actions. Romance and personal gain are on the rise. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are aggressive, courageous and ambitious. You are proactive and unusual.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	1			3				
		5				1	9	
9	6	3			1			
	4		7				3	
	2	7						5
	3		4	1		6		
	5				7			
4	9	6	8					7
3	7		1		9			6

Difficulty: ★★★ 11/21

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

7	1	4	2	9	5	6	3	8
8	5	3	6	1	7	4	9	2
9	6	2	4	3	8	5	7	1
2	4	5	1	7	9	8	6	3
6	8	7	5	4	3	1	2	9
1	3	9	8	6	2	7	4	5
5	9	8	7	2	6	3	1	4
3	7	1	9	5	4	2	8	6
4	2	6	3	8	1	9	5	7

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Difficulty: ★★★ 11/20

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

OCEAN SEAMOUNTS Solution: 9 letters

N	L	S	K	S	U	L	L	O	M	T	A	O	B	C
E	A	O	T	A	L	F	H	R	A	I	N	N	H	O
C	N	E	B	O	T	A	O	K	A	U	E	A	A	R
O	D	I	N	S	W	L	C	S	N	E	M	C	B	A
S	F	K	R	A	T	E	A	D	S	B	P	L	I	L
Y	O	X	I	A	R	E	E	N	E	I	P	O	T	R
S	R	I	M	W	M	R	R	R	T	C	L	V	A	E
T	M	G	P	U	W	B	E	I	I	I	L	S	T	E
E	A	I	S	A	I	O	U	T	D	Y	C	R	S	F
M	H	S	T	O	L	D	C	S	I	G	D	I	D	S
S	E	E	L	A	N	R	N	F	E	D	E	D	I	U
L	R	O	G	A	A	H	I	L	L	L	E	G	U	M
Y	G	O	L	O	E	G	R	O	C	K	A	M	Q	M
Y	O	S	U	P	O	T	C	O	K	R	A	H	S	I
N	I	B	A	R	C	U	R	R	E	N	T	S	W	T

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Arctic, Atlantic, Biology, Boat, Chamber, Coral Reefs, Crab, Currents, Ecosystem, Flat, Floor, Fossils, Geology, Habitat, Hawaii, Hill, Island, Knoll, Lagoon, Landform, Lobster, Magma, Mediterranean, Mollusks, Muddy, Mussel, Octopus, Pearl, Rain, Ridge, Rock, Shark, Shipwreck, Squids, Submarine, Summit, Underwater, Volcano, Whales

Yesterday's Answer: Proofread

For **WONDERWORD** apps, books & more, visit Wonderword.com, or call 1-855-232-2367.

Tatum scores 33 as Celtics hand Cavs 1st loss this season

BOSTON (AP)—The defending NBA champions held off the league's hottest team on Tuesday night, with Jayson Tatum scoring 33 points and adding 12 rebounds to lead the Boston Celtics to a 120-117 victory over Cleveland and hand the Cavaliers their first loss after 15 straight wins to open the season.

Cleveland cut a 21-point deficit to two in the third quarter, and Donovan Mitchell hit a rainbow 3-pointer with 24 seconds left to make it a four-point game. Tatum sank one of two free throws, and then clobbered Mitchell at the other end, leaving the Cavaliers guard on the floor in need of medical attention.

Mitchell eventually stepped to the line and sank both free throws, but Boston inbounded the ball without trouble and passed it downcourt for an easy Al Horford dunk to clinch it.

Tatum sank six of Boston's 22 3-pointers, and added seven assists for Boston's third straight win.

Mitchell scored 35 points, and Evan Mobley had 22 points and 11 rebounds for the Cavaliers, who were the fourth team in NBA history to open the season with 15 wins in a row. The 15-game winning streak was longest in Cavaliers franchise history.

AP

Boston Celtics forward Jayson Tatum (0) celebrates during the second half of an Emirates NBA Cup basketball game against the Cleveland Cavaliers, Tuesday, Nov. 19, 2024, in Boston.

NETS 116, HORNETS 115

NEW YORK (AP)—Cam Johnson scored 34 points, Dennis Schroder had 14 points and 12 assists and Brooklyn beat Charlotte.

Charlotte's Brandon Miller missed a 3-pointer that would have tied the game with 1.1 seconds left. Grant Williams then tipped the ball as time expired.

Jalen Wilson had 17 points and Dorian Finney-Smith added 15 as Brooklyn snapped a three-game skid.

Trendon Watford scored the Nets' last seven points in the final two minutes and finished with 10 points off the bench.

Miller had 29 points, Miles Bridges 21 and reserve Tre Mann 19 as the Hornets lost for the fourth time in five games.

NUGGETS 122, GRIZZLIES 110

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)—Jamal Murray scored 27 points, Michael Porter Jr. added 24 points and 10 rebounds as Denver Nuggets snapped a two-game losing streak defeating Memphis.

Christian Braun finished with 19 points, while Russell Westbrook added 12 points, 14 assists and 10 rebounds.

Santi Aldama led Memphis with 28 points, matching his career high. Jaren Jackson Jr. had 19 points, eight rebounds and five blocks. Scotty Pippen Jr. scored 16 points.

It was the second straight game between the two teams. Memphis defeated Denver 105-90 on Sunday. The Nuggets had lost two straight, the slide coinciding with the absence of reigning MVP Nikola Jokic who missed his third straight game Tuesday for personal reasons.

MAVERICKS 132, PELICANS 91

DALLAS (AP)—Luka Doncic returned to the lineup and scored a game-high 26 points, Klay Thompson added 19 and Kyrie Irving had 18 as Dallas beat undermanned New Orleans.

Doncic, who missed his first game of the season in Dallas' win at Oklahoma City on Sunday due to a knee injury, shot 10 of 16 overall and 3 for 8 from 3-point distance. He hit a pair of step-back 3-pointers midway through the fourth quarter giving Dallas a 111-75 lead.

Trey Murphy III, playing his fourth game this season because of hamstring issues, scored a season-high 19 points to lead the Pelicans. New Orleans was missing five of its rotation players. Two-time All-Star Zion Williamson missed his sixth consecutive game and is out indefinitely.

The Mavericks won their third straight, finishing with their highest point total of the season and largest margin of victory.

The Pelicans have lost 11 of their last 13 games.

SPURS 110, THUNDER 104

SAN ANTONIO (AP)—Keldon Johnson scored 22 points, Harrison Barnes added 20 and San Antonio beat Oklahoma City without Victor Wembanyama.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 32 points and Jalen Williams added 27 points for Oklahoma City.

The Thunder closed the game on a 27-12 run but were unable to score in the final minute.

Spurs rookie Stephon Castle, who had 10 points and eight assists, blocked Gilgeous-Alexander's layup with 22 seconds remaining and the Spurs leading 110-104.

San Antonio's Chris Paul added 14 points and 11 assists with the veteran point guard tossing in a 3-pointer as the shot clock was expiring to give the Spurs a 107-98 lead with 1:27 remaining.

LAKERS 124, JAZZ 118

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Dalton Knecht tied the NBA's single-game rookie record with nine 3-pointers while scoring a career-high 37 points, and Los Angeles beat Utah for their sixth consecutive victory.

LeBron James had 26 points and 12 assists, and Anthony Davis had 26 points and 14 rebounds as the Lakers improved to 7-0 at home. Austin Reaves added 17 points for the defending NBA Cup champions, who improved to 2-0 in group play this season.

The Lakers hadn't won six straight games since February 2021, shortly after their championship run in the Florida bubble.

Lauri Markkanen scored 25 points for the Jazz, who have lost three straight. Keyonte George scored 10 of his 18 points in the fourth quarter, and Collin Sexton added nine of his 19 in the fourth.

Rui Hachimura missed his third straight game with a sprained ankle. Bronny James sat with a bruised heel.

Analysis: Some NBA teams know it's time to shake out of early-season slides—or else

MIAMI (AP)—Postgame interviews in the NBA typically start about 10 minutes after the final buzzer. Coaches usually speak first, followed by a few players. When a team wins, most people are in a great mood. When a team loses, not so much.

That's the normal routine.

Things are not normal for Philadelphia right now.

Philadelphia lost in Miami on Monday night, the 76ers wasting an early 19-point lead and falling 106-89. The game ended at 9:51 p.m. It took more than an hour for coach Nick Nurse to emerge for his postgame media session. The reason—a team meeting, because the 76ers had a lot to talk about after falling to 2-11 on the season.

"Sorry for the delay," Nurse said to the half-dozen or so reporters who waited out his arrival. He took questions like normal, then the locker room opened and a few players talked as well.

There's a lot of the season left. The first quarter of the 82-game marathon isn't even over. It's not time to start panicking.

But some teams, quite frankly, know it's time for things to get better—Philly atop that list.

Since the NBA went to the current 16-team playoff format in 1984, there have been only four teams with losing records after 15 games that made it to the NBA Finals: San Antonio in 1998-99, Detroit in 2004-05, Boston in 2021-22 and Miami in 2022-23.

They were all 7-8.

That's bad news for Milwaukee, Philadelphia and Miami—three teams that just haven't hit anything close to their best stride yet. Injuries are a huge part of that; Khris Middleton hasn't played yet for Milwaukee, Joel Embiid played Monday night for only the third time this season for the 76ers, and the Heat got Jimmy Butler back after more than a week Monday but were without Terry Rozier and Jaime Jaquez Jr.

But the Heat are 6-7, the Bucks are 5-9 and 76ers are 2-11. And that's not anywhere near what those clubs expected coming into the year, injuries or no.

"There's urgency there, for sure," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "If you look at in both conferences, there's urgency throughout the conferences. And I think there's parity. It brings out great competition. It brings out all these different emotions. You win a game, you feel like everything is great. You lose a game, you feel like the world is coming down. That's what competition does, particularly when you're jostling so competitively in the standings where there's a lot of teams bunched up."

Philadelphia hasn't scored 100 points in three of its last four games, hasn't even reached 90 points in either of its last two games. And here's a weird stat: the 76ers are 2-0 in overtime games this season, 0-11 in games that end after 48 minutes.

"Listen, it's obviously difficult, right? Don't like the losing, that's for sure," Nurse said. "I mean, it doesn't matter. The games are coming and we've got to figure some things out. We've got to play better. Got to get our guys on the floor. There's a lot of things going on. But we've got to go out and play and somehow sustain. A lot of these games, there's lots of very good moments for long, long stretches."

Cleveland and Boston have obviously separated themselves atop the Eastern Conference; the 15-0 Cavaliers visit the 11-3 Celtics in an NBA Cup game on Tuesday night. From there, the rest of the East—from Orlando at 9-6 to Philly in a group at 2-11—are separated by just six games, with about a million games left to play. Nobody is out of it, certainly not a 76ers team that has Embiid, Tyrese Maxey, Paul George and an NBA champion point guard in Kyle Lowry.

"I mean, 2-11 is pretty bad, of course," Philly's Jared McCain said. "But it's still the beginning of the season. Least minutes played as a team together, so I say it all the time: Give us grace. We've got to get better."

To be fair, there was nothing that seemed to be shattered in the 76ers' locker room when the team meeting finally ended. No broken whiteboards, no signs of trouble, and many players were cracking jokes.

"We had a meeting? I didn't know," Embiid said, which was his way of letting reporters know that he wasn't going to spill the tea on anything that got said behind closed doors.

He did concede, however, that he might need to be more aggressive going forward. The 76ers are figuring out how to make all the pieces fit, but Embiid knows they can't keep going down this path.

"We've got that record," Embiid said, "and something needs to be done about it."

Cleveland's Vogt wins AL Manager of the Year, Milwaukee's Murphy takes home NL honor

Milwaukee's Pat Murphy and Cleveland's Stephen Vogt had the unenviable task of taking over for successful and well-liked predecessors when they were named managers of their respective teams during the offseason.

Both proved to be naturals.

Murphy won National League Manager of the Year on Tuesday after a stellar debut season with the Brewers, while Vogt took AL honors after leading the Guardians to 92 wins and a division title in his first year as a skipper at any level.

The 40-year-old Vogt is the first to go from a major league player to Manager of the Year in just two years. The previous fastest was Joe Girardi from 2003 to 2006, when he won NL Manager of the Year with the Florida Marlins.

"I got way more excited when any one of our guys hit a home run then I ever did myself or a big play or a strikeout," Vogt said. "I think that's the beauty of this role and this job—it's not about you. It's about your players and it's about their successes."

Murphy, 65, led the Brewers to a 93-69 record and an NL Central title and became the first manager in franchise history to win the award since it was introduced in 1983. In the playoffs, Milwaukee lost to the New York Mets in a Wild Card Series.

AP

From left are baseball managers, Detroit Tigers' A.J. Hinch, Kansas City Royals' Matt Quatraro and Cleveland Guardians' Stephen Vogt, in 2024.

Murphy had an unusual career path to big league success—he was a longtime college coach at Notre Dame and Arizona State before moving to the professional ranks in 2010. He worked in the Padres' minor league system until 2015 when he was hired to be Milwaukee's bench coach under Craig Counsell, who played for Murphy at Notre Dame.

After Counsell surprisingly left for the Cubs during the offseason, the Brewers quickly turned to Murphy. The transition was nearly seamless.

"I just didn't want to let the Brewers down," Murphy said. "From the ownership, to the front office, to the players and the coaching staff. I didn't want to let them down. I wanted to be prepared. I wanted to do something to advance the needle a little bit."

Murphy received 27 of 30 first-place votes in balloting by the Baseball Writers' Association of America to beat out San Diego's Mike Shildt and New York's Carlos Mendoza. Shildt, Mendoza and Philadelphia's Rob Thomson each received one first-place vote.

The 40-year-old Vogt topped Kansas City's Matt Quatraro and Detroit's A.J. Hinch, both AL Central rivals. He's the first AL manager to win the award in his debut season since Minnesota's Rocco Baldelli in 2019.

Vogt received 27 of 30 first-place votes. Quatraro got two and Hinch one.

Vogt led the Guardians to a 92-69 record and the playoffs in his first season after replacing three-time Manager of the Year winner Terry Francona. The former big league catcher took Cleveland to the AL Championship Series before losing to the New York Yankees in five games.

"I knew I had to come in and be myself," Vogt said. "I knew I would never replace Tito or fill his shoes. I just wanted to come in and be me and help our players be as good as they could be and that was the goal from day one."

Vogt is the third Cleveland skipper to win the honor, joining Francona (2013, 2016, 2022) and Eric Wedge (2007).

Mendoza — in his first year leading the Mets—guided the franchise to an 89-win season and an appearance in the NL Championship Series before they lost in six games to the eventual World Series champion Los Angeles Dodgers.

Shildt guided the Padres to the playoffs in his first season in San Diego, winning 93 games. He won the NL Manager of the Year award in 2019 with the St. Louis Cardinals.

The 51-year-old Quatraro, in his second season with the franchise, led the Royals to the postseason one year after a 106-loss season. Kansas City finished with an 86-76 record before beating Baltimore in a Wild Card Series.

Kansas City, led by catcher Salvador Perez and young star shortstop Bobby Witt Jr., lost to the Yankees in a Division Series.

Hinch, a 50-year-old in his fourth season leading the Tigers, also made the playoffs with a torrid second half despite losing quality players like right-hander Jack Flaherty at the July 30 trade deadline.

Tampa Bay Rays say new St. Pete stadium is unlikely to be ready for 2028 season, if at all

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)—A combination of severe hurricane damage to Tropicana Field and political delays on financing means it is highly unlikely the Tampa Bay Rays' planned new stadium will be ready for the 2028 season, if at all, the team said Tuesday.

Rays top executives said in a letter to the Pinellas County Commission that the team has already spent $50 million for early work on the new $1.3 billion ballpark and cannot proceed further because of delays in approval of bonds for the public share of the costs.

"The Rays organization is saddened and stunned by this unfortunate turn of events" said the letter, signed by co-presidents Brian Auld and Matt Silverman, who noted that the overall project was previously approved by the County Commission and the City of St. Petersburg.

"As we have made clear at every step of this process, a 2029 ballpark delivery would result in significantly higher costs that we are not able to absorb alone," the letter added.

The tumultuous series of events came after Hurricane Milton ripped the roof off Tropicana Field on Oct. 9, forcing the Rays to play the 2025 season at the spring training home of the New York Yankees, 11,000-seat Steinbrenner Field in Tampa. Then, the Pinellas County Commission postponed a planned Oct. 29 vote on the bond issue that the Rays said has thrown the new 30,000-seat ballpark timeline off.

AP

The roof of the Tropicana Field is damaged the morning after Hurricane Milton hit the region, Thursday, Oct. 10, 2024, in St. Petersburg, Fla.

The commission, which now includes two newly elected members, voted Tuesday to delay consideration of the financing bonds until its Dec. 17 meeting.

"This is a big deal. I'm not an anti-stadium person. I just want to make sure we're getting the deal done and it's fair," said Commissioner Dave Eggers.

That leaves the Rays' future in St. Petersburg in limbo.

"We know we're going to be in Steinbrenner in 2025 and we don't know much beyond that," Auld said in an interview.

Asked if Major League Baseball can survive long term in the Tampa Bay area, Rays Principal Owner Stuart Sternberg said the outlook is "less rosy than it was three weeks ago. We're going to do all that we can, as we've tried for 20 years, to keep the Rays here for generations to come."

The team's contract with the city of St. Petersburg requires that the Rays play three more seasons at Tropicana Field assuming it is repaired. The cost of fixing the ballpark in time for the 2026 season is pegged at more than $55 million for a building scheduled to be torn down when the new facility is ready.

Under the original plan, Pinellas County would spend about $312.5 million for the new ballpark and the city of St. Petersburg around $417 million including infrastructure improvements. The Rays and their partner, the Hines development company, would cover the remaining costs including any overruns.

It isn't just baseball that is affected. The new Rays ballpark is part of a larger urban renovation project known as the Historic Gas Plant District, which refers to a predominantly Black neighborhood that was forced out by construction of Tropicana Field and an interstate highway spur.

The broader $6.5 billion project would transform an 86-acre (34-hectare) tract in the city's downtown, with plans in the coming years for a Black history museum, affordable housing, a hotel, green space, entertainment venues, and office and retail space. There's the promise of thousands of jobs as well.

Success of Derrick Henry, Saquon Barkley, other running backs may change position's future

By ROB MAADDI AP
Pro Football Writer

Derrick Henry, Saquon Barkley and Josh Jacobs are the top three leading rushers in the NFL.

Every team had a chance to add them in the offseason.

Henry, Barkley and Jacobs switched teams in free agency along with several other starting running backs who are leading their teams in rushing. J.K. Dobbins, Tony Pollard, Aaron Jones and De'Andre Swift are on the list. Joe Mixon also changed uniforms but he was traded.

Many running backs felt they were being devalued last year and openly expressed their frustration. They were paid better this season, though nowhere close to the money quarterbacks and wide receivers receive.

AP

Baltimore Ravens running back Derrick Henry (22) runs with the ball in front of Pittsburgh Steelers linebacker T.J. Watt (90) during the first half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Nov. 17, 2024, in Pittsburgh.

The success of Henry, Barkley and others could change the future of the position. Teams may be more inclined to give top backs bigger contracts.

Henry signed a two-year, $16 million deal with the Baltimore Ravens. He has 1,185 yards rushing and 13 touchdowns.

Barkley got a $37.5 million, three-year contract with $26 million guaranteed from the Philadelphia Eagles. He leads the NFL with 1,347 scrimmage yards, including 1,137 on the ground, and has eight rushing TDs and two more receiving.

Mixon received a $25.5 million, three-year deal from Houston after he was traded by Cincinnati. He has 764 yards rushing and 10 TDs, including three Monday night, in eight games.

Christian McCaffrey is the highest-paid running back with an average annual salary of $19 million. Meanwhile, 23 receivers are averaging at least $20 million per season, including six making $30 million.

Henry, Barkley and Mixon have been bargains for likely playoff-bound teams with Super Bowl aspirations.

They could pave the way for other backs to get paid.

Underrated Tomlin

Mike Tomlin is one win away from securing his 18th winning season in 18 years as the head coach for the Pittsburgh Steelers. This could be Tomlin's best coaching job yet.

The Steelers (8-2) took control of the AFC North with an 18-16 win over Baltimore (7-4) and have established themselves as surprise Super Bowl contenders. They were an afterthough t coming into the season before starting 4-2 with Justin Fields filling in for Russell Wilson. Tomlin was widely criticized for switching to Wilson when he returned from a calf injury and the Steelers haven't lost since.

Hall of Fame coach Tony Dungy was among the few national analysts who supported Tomlin's decision to make a QB change.

TEAMS

From page 16

The spectators at the Marianas High School Gymnasium witnessed a spectacle of intense back-and-forth action, skill, and unrelenting determination that led to fights to the finish in all matches.

The Mount Carmel School Lady Knights wrapped up the evening with an undefeated run of three consecutive wins after they beat Francisco M. Sablan Middle School Napu Riders, 21-19, 17-21, 15-13.

Mia Guerrero, Miana Dela Cruz, Adelle Kautz, Caydince Masga, O-ren Sasamoto, Neia Tagabuel, Paige Muna, Aliyani Basa, Eunyu Zoey Kwak, Sofia Dimafelix, Trisha Abuan, and Heaven Deleon Guerrero's chemistry is unmatched this season, but the Napu Riders gave them a run for their money.

After MCS won a close first set, the Napu Riders bounced back in the second to tie it all up. The third set had everyone on the edge of their seats which ended the long day of games in thrilling fashion in favor of MCS.

Another undefeated team with three wins, the Dandan Middle School Tottots got the better of defending champions Grace Christian Academy Lady Eagles, 21-8, 18-21, 15-13.

DMS' Avah Dela Cruz, Elikristiana Iglecias, Farrah Katosang, Genicia Agulto, Isabelle Deleon Guerrero, Kaya Babauta, Maria Aguon, Melody Taitano, Morgan Castro, Rhodalyn Zandueta, and Zowie Deleon Guerrero thought they could get past the Lady Eagles easily after a 21-8 first set, but the Lady Eagles had other plans.

GCA took the second set which forced a tie-breaker, but DMS redid their strategy and executed it well to seal their undefeated record.

Before that, Hopwood Middle School Hilitais found their first win of the season as they defeated Saipan International School Geckos, 21-12, 10-21, 16-14.

Franchesca Ferrer, Jayla Ayuyu, Elyza Brillo, Elissa Calayag, Augyguel Castro, Geana Chargualaf, Alina Esakova, Tehani Jolo, Seraya Kaniki, Neisha Kukkun, Hennewe Phillip, Dorcia Santos, Elena Teigita, and Doreane Tudela found their rhythm and won their first game of the season—but it was an uphill battle. They had the first set down pat, but the last two had them gasping for air from a rough and tumble SIS team. The tie-breaker ended in extra points as HMS locked in and clinched the win from clutch plays.

In the junior varsity games earlier in the afternoon, FMS II routed MCS II, 21-16, 11-21, 15-7.

FMS II's Roann Arriola, Shioni Odoshi, Chloe Enriques, Yasmin Mamaril, Yoheveth Feria, Marina Matagolai, Kaylee Lizama, Maria Salas, Nianalyn Mettao, Hazel Guilas, and Xianelle Tabenas took matters into their own hands after they badly fumbled the second set, and quickly ended the game in a much easier third set.

And, SIS II started the day off with a win over Chacha Ocean View Middle School Lancherus II, 20-22, 21-14, 15-7.

Despite having a much smaller team, the Lady Geckos put up a long fight that got the stretched-out day of matches rolling. Faith Arriola, Arianna Chi, Jamie Whang, Olivia Zhang, Jiayi Li, Scarlett Burrell, Carlina Maras, and Jenna Pascual regained their composure after a close first set that could've gone either way. They then won the second set to even it up and took that momentum into the third to secure the win.

Games are played every Tuesday and Thursday, with the championship series set for Jan. 16-18, 2025.

ACS

From page 16

ACS 1 took on SIS 2 and cashed in a sweep of all five events in the girls/boys singles/doubles and mixed doubles event.

As for Bracket 3, the Tatagas lead with 16 points, followed by the Eagles at 11. Francisco M. Sablan Middle School Napu Riders are at nine; Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Jr./ Sr. High School has eight; and Dandan Middle School Tottots have five.

The Tatagas collected just two wins over GCA 2 in the boys doubles and girls singles, but it was still enough to retain the top spot in their bracket.

The Top 6 double-elimination round is on Nov. 23, with the championship rounds on Nov. 29.

LEIGH GASES

Saipan International School shuttlers in action during one of their games in the 2024-2025 PSS-NMBA Interscholastic Co-ed Middle School Badminton League at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

TYSL

From page 16

beat Kanoa FC 2, 2-1; and Matansa and Kanoa FC 1 ended in a scoreless draw.

The youth division third place games and finals will all be played on Saturday, Dec. 14, starting from 1:30pm, with the last game at 6:20pm.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	12	3	.800	–
New York	8	6	.571	3½
Brooklyn	6	9	.400	6
Toronto	3	12	.200	9
Philadelphia	2	11	.154	9
Southeast Division				
Orlando	9	6	.600	–
Atlanta	7	8	.467	2
Miami	6	7	.462	2
Charlotte	5	9	.357	3½
Washington	2	11	.154	6
Central Division				
Cleveland	15	1	.938	–
Detroit	7	9	.438	8
Indiana	6	8	.429	8
Chicago	6	9	.400	8½
Milwaukee	5	9	.357	9

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	10	5	.667	–
Dallas	8	7	.533	2
Memphis	8	7	.533	2
San Antonio	7	8	.467	3
New Orleans	4	11	.267	6
Northwest Division				
Oklahoma City	11	4	.733	–
Denver	8	5	.615	2
Minnesota	8	6	.571	2½
Portland	6	8	.429	4½
Utah	3	11	.214	7½
Pacific Division				
Golden State	10	3	.769	–
L.A. Lakers	10	4	.714	½
Phoenix	9	6	.600	2
L.A. Clippers	8	7	.533	3
Sacramento	8	7	.533	3

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Buffalo	9	2	0	.818	320	214
Miami	4	6	0	.400	181	221
N.Y. Jets	3	8	0	.273	204	242
New England	3	8	0	.273	182	248
South						
Houston	7	4	0	.636	258	236
Indianapolis	5	6	0	.455	236	250
Tennessee	2	8	0	.200	170	263
Jacksonville	2	9	0	.182	208	316
North						
Pittsburgh	8	2	0	.800	233	162
Baltimore	7	4	0	.636	334	271
Cincinnati	4	7	0	.364	297	296
Cleveland	2	8	0	.200	162	248
West						
Kansas City	9	1	0	.900	240	191
L.A. Chargers	7	3	0	.700	220	145
Denver	6	5	0	.545	235	183
Las Vegas	2	8	0	.200	187	285

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Philadelphia	8	2	0	.800	259	179
Washington	7	4	0	.636	308	243
Dallas	3	7	0	.300	187	293
N.Y. Giants	2	8	0	.200	156	222
South						
Atlanta	6	5	0	.545	244	274
Tampa Bay	4	6	0	.400	279	266
New Orleans	4	7	0	.364	262	260
Carolina	3	7	0	.300	167	310
North						
Detroit	9	1	0	.900	336	177
Minnesota	8	2	0	.800	244	170
Green Bay	7	3	0	.700	250	213
Chicago	4	6	0	.400	194	187
West						
Arizona	6	4	0	.600	238	220
L.A. Rams	5	5	0	.500	213	239
San Francisco	5	5	0	.500	250	222
Seattle	5	5	0	.500	230	238

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tatum scores 33 as Celtics hand Cavs 1st loss this season

PAGE 13

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Success of Derrick Henry, Saquon Barkley, other running backs may change position's future

PAGE 15

Third time's the charm for girls v-ball teams

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

If at first they didn't succeed, they tried and tried again, as all five matches played in the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Girls Middle School Volleyball League 2024-2025 last Tuesday were decided in tie-breaking third sets.

See TEAMS on Page 15

LEIGH GASES

The undefeated Mount Carmel School team is in a huddle with their coach during one of their games in the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Girls Middle School Volleyball League 2024-2025 at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Dandan Middle School Tottots girls varsity volleyball team poses for a group photo during the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Girls Middle School Volleyball League 2024-2025 at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Shirley's cooks up a storm in TYSL

NMIFA

A Shirley's player, left, stretches for the ball during their game against Paire in the TakeCare Youth Soccer League Fall 2024 at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville last Saturday.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Shirley's Football Club cooked up a storm in two divisions of the TakeCare Youth Soccer League Fall 2024 at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville last Saturday.

Their U14 boys team was no match to Paire FC as they defeated them, 6-1.

Shirley's controlled the ball and the game early on with a goal just five minutes in by Izaiah Haro. That set the tone for the rest of the match as they doubled their lead another five minutes later from a goal-hungry Haro.

Paire could not collect themselves yet at this point but had some missed opportunities that led to naught. Shirley's, on the other hand, converted yet another goal in the 13th minute from a good kick off Jpiel Calsita to boast a 3-0 lead.

Shirley's reign of terror in the first half didn't end there as they munched up another goal in the 22nd by Justo Quitugua. After some silence, Zian Lavarias gave Shirley's a 5-0 advantage in the 34th minute that was immediately followed by their sixth and final goal by Quitugua.

Paire then joined the party in the 46th minute from a goal by William Flores, but it was too little too late as Shirley's held on to win, 6-1.

For their U17 girls team, Shirley's ruled, 2-0, also versus Paire.

In other results, Matansa's U17 boys team got the better of Latte, 7-2, and Kanoa blanked MP United, 2-0. In the U17 girls division, Kanoa silenced MP United, 6-0; MP United's U14 girls team won over Latte, 2-0, and Kanoa overpowered Paire, 7-1; as for the U14 boys division, MP United slipped past Latte, 2-1; and Kanoa FC 1 defeated Matansa, 3-0.

In the younger divisions, the U12 boys team of Paire

See TYSL on Page 15

NMIFA

A Shirley's player right, goes up against a Paire player during the TakeCare Youth Soccer League Fall 2024 at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville last Saturday.

ACS, GCA, SIS, TMS advance to badminton playoffs

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The Top 2 teams in all three brackets advanced to the playoffs after their final round-robin matches in the 2024-2025 PSS-NMBA Interscholastic Co-ed Middle School Badminton League last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The six teams that made it to the playoffs are Agape Christian School Torchbearers 2 and Saipan International School 1 from Bracket 1; ACS 1 and Grace Christian Academy Eagles 1 from Bracket 2; and Tanapag Middle School Tatagas and GCA 2 from Bracket 3.

LEIGH GASES

Grace Christian Academy shuttlers listen to the umpire along with Saipan International School players during their one of their games in the 2024-2025 PSS-NMBA Interscholastic Co-ed Middle School Badminton League at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Bracket 1's Top 2 teams showed off their exemplary skill throughout the season as they both nearly swept all their matches with 19 points and wins each.

ACS 2 gained their last three wins over Saipan Community School in the boys singles/doubles and mixed doubles events. Meanwhile, SIS 1 won three events over ACS 2 to tie it up with them atop the standings with 19 points.

A distant third place is Hopwood Middle School 2 at 11; Tinian Jr. High School 1 at 10; Dandan Middle School has nine; and SCS at seven.

In Bracket 2, ACS remains dominant as ACS 1 also boasts a 19-win record; GCA 1 has 13; HMS 1 are at nine; SIS 2 has eight; and Chacha Ocean View Middle School record one win.

See ACS on Page 15